

UNFINISHED JOURNEY

The Story of a Nation



SUMIT SHARMA SAMEER

This book is a travelogue of a common man who relates his life story with a story of his nation, Nepal. It is an attempt to look how humans lead their lives. The dilemmas, values, and worldviews they live with. How they are involved in the creation, construction and destruction of their own society and nation.

At age thirty two, author relates his life with the life of his nation. How have both of them grown? The author has viewed the political development of Nepal through the eyes of his father, who had been an activist in the Nepalese democratic political struggle for more than thirty years.

The book talks about author's perceptions about his country, society and people. At times it is merely a report, and at times memoir and in some other cases an analysis. An attempt has been made to explore questions like- Why is something happening the way it is? How is author himself involved in the important events and the growth processes?

What are his responsibilities as a citizen of a nation and world? What is the significance of an ordinary life that is influenced, indoctrinated and overwhelmed by the events and forces that were neither conceived nor executed by it? What role can men play to grasp the meaning of his/her own life? As an inquisitive member of a nation and a planet, the author has raised numerous questions and has tried answering them. The book is also an inward journey of an author.

The book has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter, thirty two years of life has depicted the growth of an author along with the growth of his nation. The important events that have taken place since 1977 in Nepal have been reported and analysis made on those events.

The second chapter, imprisoned consciousness captures the recent events in Nepal and investigation has been made on the repercussions of those events. This chapter describes the Maoists rise in power and abuse of the same.

The third chapter, New Context: Moment of Choice has focused on new ideas that have proliferated in the field of politics, society, economy, religion, science at the international context. It discusses how these international changes have impacted Nepal. The chapter is also a wake-up call to all Nepalese.

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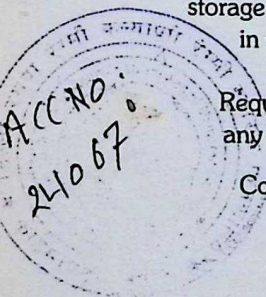
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DEDICATED TO
My generation

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Binu, my wife, who constantly boosted my confidence while writing this book. My parents without whose support, it was not possible for me to complete my work. Biswo Poudyal, Jugal Bhurtel, Bed Prasad Giri, Shekhar Kharel, Subel Bhandari and Jagganath Lamichane for their valuable feedbacks. To all those authors and publishing houses without whose support my work could not have materialized. Any shortfalls within a book are totally mine.

FOREWORD

Any book has something to offer. A book is judged through words, sentences and experiences which are built upon our assumptions and thoughts. The book, 'Unfinished Journey: Story of a Nation' is not meant for those readers who are seeking new knowledge, new science and new theories.

As a reader passes through the book, they are confronted with the conflicting views of the writer. At many places, one finds an author at a state of confusion. But in my opinion, such a state of confusion is one of the strong and beautiful aspects of this book.

This book is an enquiry of 'self', an enquiry drawn from own experiences. As one walks along the book, bold and defiant character of an author comes to fore through his candid conversation with himself about his own experiences and shortcomings as a human being. Every reader will find a story and experiences of an author their own because the experiences of our generation in contemporary world do not vastly differ with one another.

It would, therefore not be wrong to claim that this book is a reflection of the experiences of our own lives. It is equally true that this book is only a part of our experiences because in a short span of time our generations have experienced many different things at different contexts and occasions.

The author, Sumit Sharma Sameer was born thirty two years back in a political family. During his thirty two years of life, he received an opportunity to walk and witness the political course of Nepal. A change in a political landscape does not bring a linear

change or a change in a system alone, but influences the various facets of society. It brings a change in our relations, priorities and perspectives.

As a result, there is a perspective change in viewing issues, events and actors. This book is a living testimony that talks about how the perspective of a common man is transformed due to such events. And this book compels and motivates every reader to reflect back into their lives, to experience how at different occasions our ideologies and understandings are at constant conflict, and how the old thinking has been replaced by new ones.

The chapters ahead give an opportunity for the readers to directly relate and talk with the author. In fact, in many occasions, they will find themselves talking through the author because this book is a story of common man and women, traveling and growing along with the growth of their societies, nations and world. The book has sought the values of life and meaning of existence in its own approach and style.

The first chapter '32 years of life' questions the meaning of human existence, values of life and has explored the relationships between life and death. It talks about the process and events that led the author to seek his own existence. Seeking self existence, the chapter has tried to define the existence of common human. The historical events and the growth process of Nepal has been captured.

As Nepal has passed through many phases, the details have been explained and questions been raised against the shortcomings of political, societal and human values that acted as hindrances for Nepal's path to development and prosperity. The chapter is a travelogue where a nation passes from a unitary centralized monarchy to a republican state. It incorporates a fresh account of a country trajectory.

The second chapter 'Imprisoned conscience' talks about how Nepalese political parties, social classes, ethnic-social movements and religion have impacted the psychic of Nepali society. It talks about how these events, processes and actors have imprisoned the

conscience of Nepali masses by leaving them with the option of not choosing among the best, but the worst.

Going against prevailing trend of Nepal, the chapter boldly challenges the competencies of 'communism' to alleviate the suffering of masses. It's a bold cry for reform against existing practices, norms, beliefs, attitudes that exists in Nepalese institutions, structures and society.

The third chapter 'New Context: Moment of Choice' outlines the development taking place on economic, social, political and scientific fronts at the global level. It documents how these changing events are having a sweeping effect in a small country, Nepal. The chapter argues that Nepal cannot remain in isolation and unchanged as world is rapidly changing.

The chapter is also a call to Nepalese in particular and common people in general to alter their way of living to bring quality changes in the lives of deprived people. It's a cry for co-existence and cooperation among larger stakeholders to bring an end to a politics that thrive on hatred, violence, crime and subjugation. It's a cry in favor of justice, cooperation and dignity. It's a realization that the aim of life is to live for the betterment of others by uplifting self.

All in all, the book is firsthand information and contains insights on how Nepal has gradually evolved as a country. It is a travelogue, memoir of a man who himself was involved in three important political revolutions for democracy.

For me, this book opens up various facets of my close friend, Sumit Sharma Sameer with whom I have shared more than ten years of my life in political struggle and various ups and downs. More than that, it has compelled me to engross and explore the existence of my own life.

Gagan Thapa
Constituent Assembly Member
Nepali Congress
Kathmandu
Nepal

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PROLOGUE

There are two kinds of people who require no introduction- popular and ordinary. Popular attributes define popular personalities, while apart from ordinariness; there is nothing special that can define a common man. Ordinariness is a special characteristic feature of majority of human being. And I am one among the majority.

And unlike any common human; sentiments, sensibilities and experiences are integral part of my life. For me the Year 1977 is important- I was born. To me birthdays shorten an individual's life. A birthday reminds that one more year of life has been passed away. It brings one closer to the death which is an inevitable truth in everyone's life.

I see life as a combination of two basic elements- body and soul. In due course of time, body ceases to exist while the soul transplants itself to another body.

Bhagvat Gita says:

vāsāmsi jirnāni yathā vihaya
navāni grhnāti naro parāni
tathā sarirāni vihāya jirnāny
anyāni samyāti navāāni dehī

(Sankhya Yoga; Sloka 22)

Excerpt from the scripture means: As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up old and useless ones. Because of such realization, death remained my close companion. It is death that kept me reminding, 'I have a responsibility in life'. One that needs to be fulfilled before my body ceases to exist.

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For me death is greater than life. It makes individual responsible. It beautifies and put life on moral track. It is death that compels one to explore life. Aristotle said: 'If there is no death, there can be no religion in world'. Without death life is anarchy. Death is, but not an end of real 'self'. It is only a demise of our material body.

In my case, death has been a perpetual preoccupation. I have always thought, lived and acted with the consciousness of death. The rest is unimportant. Life is incomplete minus death. This is because it reminds me about a 'limited time' that my body has been endowed with. It reinforces my belief to that 'limited time'.

And such a 'limited time' can be termed life. Life and death are in fact complimentary to each other. Both are two aspects of the same coin. And both are incomplete without each other. In reality, natural death is an exotic part of our life. I see it as redemption after the limitless rigors of life.

I am a common man and have no hesitation to accept that I have my own conviction, contradictions and multiple identities. In my case, it is equally true that having seen the world around me; I wish to take an early retirement from my life. Yet I wish to put a serene and ferocious battle in a short time against all odds and frustrations before taking any retirement.

World around me was frustrating. It was a world of hunger, poverty, impunity and injustice. It was world of hypocrisy that was beset by wars involving inflated egos and muscle power. It was indeed a world of human-induced deaths and natural disasters. It was neither attractive nor lucrative for me. And I believe the world would appear in the same light to many other people. Still, we are resigned to go on, accepting whatever comes our way. In fact, we compete fiercely to have our part of it!

We live in an illusory world, but life has a deeper and beautiful meaning. That is because our life is only a 'span of time' between our birth and death. We are nothing more than a 'span of time'. We experience our entire 'self' within that short span of time. Realization of our life as a span of time is only possible by realizing truest meaning of living.

Truly living is in fact a process of awakening. It is a process of

self-remembering. And seek meaning in those things that have been considered and legitimized as insignificant by an illusory world.

A relation with one's family has a meaning in life. In the same vein are relations with one's neighbors and society. These are supposedly considered insignificant, and yet these are the most significant claims that make life worthy. Friends give meaning to life. Since many lives are deeply attached with these significant relations, no life should be left to waste. Unfortunately, it is an illusory world that reduces life to meaninglessness, constantly driving us away from the realities of life and death.

I decided not to allow my life to be overpowered by the excesses of the material world. My life meant a lot to me. I found life's meaning in realizing and living in the truest sense. I kept interacting with myself to realize the vastness of life. My communion with my own self thrilled me. It made me understand and connect myself with many more lives.

It reaffirmed my belief that life is beautiful. Life is indeed a splendid gift granted to us, and every small occurrence in life has its own delight. Unfortunately; we are madly in chase of happiness in the course of our lives for failing to realize that the course itself ensures happiness.

Whenever I have interacted with my own 'self', I have found both a culprit and a judge within me. I am both an innocent and a hypocrite. I am both an honest and a corrupt one. I am a leader and a liar, a suppressor and a liberator, humanizer and a dictator, a spiritualist and a materialist. I am an intellectual and a layman, a peace-lover and a war-monger. And I am a killer and a victim. My 'self' is a complex blend of all these facets.

My 'self' is neither any system, nor any 'ism'. It is neither any values, nor any customs, neither any knowledge nor any understanding. It is neither any facts and figures nor any principles. It is neither a tradition nor any culture. It is neither any perception nor analysis. It is neither a science nor any philosophy. It is neither any caste nor any color. It is neither any class nor any creed. It is neither any race nor any religion. It is only a free spirit. Yet reality remains, it encompassed all these things.

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It was me who served humanity and crushed it. It was me who contributed to civilization and disgraced it. It was me who killed tens of thousands of people in the name of internationalism. And it was me who mutilated, butchered and murdered thousands in the name of tribal identity. It was me who questioned and supplied answers. It was me who made inventions and it was me who burnt scientists alive. It was me who explored the wonders of nature and it was me who abused it. And I am a human. I was a human. So shall I remain.

This book is a story of human beings. It is an attempt to look at how humans lead their lives. The dilemmas, values, and worldviews they live with. How they are involved in the creation and destruction of their own society and nation. I have tried perceiving this entire process by relating my life with the gradual evolution process of my nation.

How have both of us evolved and grown? What are my perceptions about my country, society and its people? I will limit myself to being a reporter and an analyst. I shall try to record the significant national and international events since 1977 as I began the journey of my life from 1977.

An attempt has been made to explore questions like- Why is something happening the way it is? How am I involved in these events and the growth processes? What are my responsibilities as a citizen of a nation and the world? What is the significance of an ordinary life like mine that is influenced, indoctrinated and overwhelmed by the events and forces that were neither conceived nor executed by me? What role can man play to grasp the meaning of his/her life?

As an inquisitive member of a nation and the planet, I have raised certain questions. I have asked questions and have tried answering them. This book is an attempt to make sense of my own life to myself and has travelled through a self exploration process.

And for this inquiry, the credit goes to all known and unknown persons- my parents, my peers, my community, my region, my continent and my planet. It is they who have bequeathed me with the context I am living in, and it is they who have taught me to ask questions that have been raised in the book ahead.

Chapter 1

32 Years of Life

When I see things around me,
I see nothing,
Is it my ignorance or nothing exists?
Still something exist which probably is nothing?
I wonder about the existence of nothingness around me.....

I wonder on the nature, stars, skies and planets,
I wonder on me, men, society, systems, and nations
I wonder on knowledge, power, and capital
With all the wonders around me, pity falls on me
I am showered with the infallibility of the man-kind
And all I will have at the end is as much of the earth as will be
enough to bury me....

At times it comes to my mind- life has no meaning at all. We are merely insignificant contributors to the larger process that has been constantly evolving around us. Everyone contributes to a process through life and death. We pass on a process to our next generation that will again contribute to the process and so on.

There would be no difference in what the succeeding generations do. Only the approach might change. Such a process has continued since humanity came into existence. Science claims- every process has a beginning and an end. If that is a case, does such a claim apply to the process of life and death? However, I am not aware if science could ever challenge such a process!

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I am a vulnerable creature. Except for the contribution made towards a larger process, there is nothing significant I can do. We do not have a capacity to regulate anything; we are merely a part of grand regulation. However, we can try to understand our real self in this grand regulation. This is because I exist. And unlike every existence I have a story of my own. Some may find their story important and others may not. Some choose to express, while others are happy to remain quiet.

The story of my life is a telling tale to me that gives meaning to my existence. Therefore, I have chosen to express myself. Feelings spelt out are not soiled by an art of intelligence, but are merely raw expressions. Reflecting on thirty two years of life I have lived, it suddenly dawns on me how quickly time flies.

And except experiences, learning and memories time has nothing more to offer. It is not us who manages time, but it is always time that manages us completely. Time is profound. It guides and determines life. It is therefore larger than life.

The importance of life but cannot be diminished. There is life; therefore there is death and the profoundness of time. Time guides life, but stands nowhere without life. Time and life is therefore same thing. Life has energy of its own. Life generates lives. It instills hope and faith in humanity. And before being shunted away by death, I want to live my life with vigor.

My passion for life was inculcated in me by my parents. It all began with my father deciding to move to Janakpurdham, a historical town in the southern plains of Nepal, from Manthali of Ramechhap in northeastern part of the country. I belong to the 'Ghimire' clan that settled in Manthali three centuries ago.

My father, Samir Ghimire left his ancestral home in Manthali for Janakpur to join Sarswati High School. Since then, he has lived in Janakpur. He has dedicated his entire life for the social and political development of Dhanusha district. Inclined to politics since his early school days, he joined the Nepali Congress and was soon a part of the democratic movement.

He was given the party membership in 1970 by Saroj Prasad

Koirala, who attained martyrdom later in the course of the revolution, in Madhubani, India. During that time, the Congress party was banned in Nepal.



My father with late Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, Nepal's first elected prime minister.

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I think my father inherited the political legacy from his father, Indra Prasad Upadhayaya, Minister for Agriculture, in the self-proclaimed government formed by the Nepali Congress in eastern number-2 constituency that covered Sindhuli, Ramechhap and Dolakha districts.

After the Nepali Congress spearheading a revolution struck a deal with the Rana government in 1950, it was not possible for the district leaders to forsake the mukti sena (liberation army) and rush to Kathmandu. Therefore, after holding consultations among the leaders in the district, Dhundi Raj Bhandari formed the regional people's government. My grandfather was an agriculture minister in the same ministry.

I suppose, Hridya Raj Sharma, my father's late uncle also played an influential role in shaping my father's political life. My grandfather's youngest brother, Hridya Raj remained active both in the fields of politics and literature throughout his life. As a politician, he was an active member of the Nepali Congress and worked in various capacities within the party.

He remained a central member of the party since 1950. He was at the forefront while attacking Udaypur along Rudra Prasad Giri during the congress led armed revolution in 1950. During 1959, he became a part of the Parallel Congress which was formed by splitting itself from the Nepali Congress. His little contribution to literature was in the form of a play- Nissiddha.

My mother, Sarita went to the same high school where my father studied. She was five years junior to him. They fell in love, which eventually ended in a marriage not approved by families on either side. In spite of various ups and downs in life, I have sensed their love ever growing. My father did not do well in his studies, so he gave up school after Grade 10. Neither could he manage to get a job as politics drifted him away from the intricacies of a professional life.

My mother shouldered the responsibility of managing our family. She took up a job as a junior clerk at the Janakpur Cigarette Factory for a monthly salary of Rs.352.80. My father added to the

family income, intermittently operating his jeep from Janakpur to Sindhuli. Apart of it, we had our ancestral home and a few aluminum (steel) utensils to lunch and dine for.

A memorable part of my childhood has always been a dinner time. Unlike many others living in the Terai, we used to dine late at night. My parents, two elder sisters and myself used to eat while my father narrated us stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata. These epic stories had a magical effect on my budding mind. My intuition picked up the moral of the stories which invariably meant 'Truth always comes out victorious no matter how difficult the course'. My belief in truth grew stronger as I matured.

My father spent total of five years in prison during various movements at different times. My mother faced a lot of trouble bringing us up. She used to work, go to college and look after three of us. One thing that will always stay in my mind is poverty we faced from so close during our childhood. Initially, we lived in a two-storied tiled (terakota) house but, rain used to drip from a roof during a rainy season.

When there was a heavy downpour, my mother used to sleep under the bed taking us along with her, placing a plastic cover above it. It was indeed a great struggle on part of my mother. And I believe many Nepalese mothers have displayed similar courage raising our generation. Mothers are ungraspable, larger than life. Explaining them through words is to belittle them.

Since an early age, I had been inquisitive about nature. I always questioned things around me. I have been frequently talking to myself. My unease with my surroundings led me question the relevance of my life with myself. I think the personal characteristic that I developed since my childhood can easily be related to the sentiments of common men of my age throughout the globe. And this has been due to ongoing local, regional, national and international conditions, life processes and worldviews. Indeed, mankind has many things in common to share.

The free flow of information and knowledge has broken many barriers today. Theories have been questioned, perspectives

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challenged and outlooks have changed. Science has constantly scrutinized everything. Liberal democracy has emerged as the most popular political system globally. Yet human sufferings persist and are ever magnifying, ever growing by leaps and bounds.

The limitless inventions and knowledge have failed to address these ever intensifying problems. Why have we failed to wipe out our misery? What is the use of new knowledge that cannot alleviate human suffering? Why has knowledge not been humanized yet?

All these questions bothered me since childhood and matured along with those stories that my father narrated as I grew. It used to be like a bed-time story. He began with Mao Zedong and Indira Gandhi. Once he said, "No one is as powerful as time. Even very powerful leaders like Mao and Gandhi faced life's judgment.

Mao died in 1976 and Indira Gandhi was put behind bars in India. The death of Mao brought Den Xiaoping to power in China. In South Africa, the death of Steve Biko led for renewed opposition to apartheid. Ours was a time of rising, time for freedom and hope."

Looking at the present condition of Nepal, I feel unlike my father - 'For our country this is the time of rising, freedom and hope'! Looking at my father's generation closely I feel that every generation rises with hope and freedom, but many compromises with frustration and despairs. I never wanted same to happen to me or my generation.

He went on-" Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto loses power when his Chief of Army Staff General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq imposed martial law. America ushered in the Carter era. Alvin Toffler was strongly arguing for a distinct type of democracy for the 21st century world. His book, *The Third Wave* outlined the threats to democracy established by the founding father of America. And he was voicing for the reconsideration of the US constitution."

"It was during the same time when Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom made a state opening of both the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments. The Likud party won an election in Israel. Spain had its first democratic elections, after 41yrs under the Franco regime."

As my father narrated me the international context of his time, my inquisitiveness to understand the socio-economic, political and cultural context of my own country grew leaps and bounds. I started exploring and found that unlike any nation in the globe, politics of our country was carving her own distinct route for herself.

During that time the political history was written by those individuals in power. Nepal's political process has always been highly personalized, revolving around few individuals and personalities. Our political course has thrived on informal relationships. Formal procedures takes a back seat as the informal contacts dominates. Therefore a power is largely vested upon and is exercised by individual and personality, not by an institutional setup.

The key power players in Nepal during the last six decades have been the monarchs, Ranas, political leaders and irresponsible elites. Throughout the history, those in power have attempted to create a system and an ideology to secure their own class. In the process political stakeholders have vied fiercely against each other.

And due to the struggle the society has been polarized. Crises were injected. Crises have prevailed in all sectors and institutions since the inception of modern Nepal. Most importantly; there has been a crisis of morale. Crisis in leadership. Crisis in determination. And none of us have won because of these crises. We all have lost.

Crises were prevalent when my grandfather was a democratic activist. The same crises prevailed when my father joined politics. Nepal is a democratic republic today. And even now the same crises persist. Generations have dedicated their entire lives to improving the political process. But things remain almost the same, at times deteriorating even further.

I often question myself, 'What has been the outcome of activism displayed by common people of this country for the sake of democracy? What has been the outcome of sacrifices made by known and unknown martyrs of our country?

King Prithivi Narayan Shah established the kingdom of Nepal in 1769 by unifying dozens of smaller kingdoms and principalities.

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King Prithivi Narayan devoted his entire life to unifying the hostile principalities, and his work deserves the status of a founding father. Yet his contribution towards building a nation state has been questioned in today's Nepal.

Radical communists and a section of thinkers contest the idea of King Prithivi as the 'founding father'. They argue that King Prithivi was an oppressor who took small principalities by force. How can a unifier become an oppressor? Aren't unifiers regarded as a symbol of unity? In every country, at some point of time, some leaders wage war against the principalities for the unification of nation and they are regarded as the founding fathers.

Does any Indian hate Ashoka or Prithivi Raj Chauhan? Or are they respected as founding fathers who took the onus to unite their country, often brutally? Even Lenin did not want to dismantle the Jar Peter's statue after the Bolshevik revolution. Everyone has his own opinion about history. One can agree or disagree.

But history cannot be eliminated or dismantled. History will not remain a history if it is completely wiped out. It has to be preserved for generations to follow so that they will have no problem tracing their root. History is not made or remade just because someone bears a grudge against it. It is what it is.

No doubt, King Prithivi Narayan failed to unify country emotionally. In the absence of a unifying philosophy, we have remained no more than a bunch of administrative abstractions. None of the Shah rulers, Ranas or the leaders of the political parties tried to address this issue. We still remain a divided nation.

Diversity is strength-resource for any country. For us it has become weakness. Today Nepalese are divided into Pahadis, Madhesis, Tharus, Magars, Bahuns, Chettris, Newars, Gurungs, Dalits, and Indigenous communities. Diversity is saleable economy and an invigorating strength for a nation. For us, it has turned out to be a debilitating weakness.

In 1846, the Shah Kings lost their powers to Rana prime ministers. It was the beginning of the 104 years of Rana family oligarchy. Entire century was spent in political struggle among

section of political elites wanting to capitalize full-fledged power. Why is power so attractive? I have always failed to understand.

The year 1950 marked the turning point in the history of Nepal. In that year, then King Tribhuvan joined hands with citizens to liberate country from the Ranas' clutch. King Tribhuvan promised democracy to our country, but he died in 1955, before he could implement his commitment.

King Mahendra who succeeded his father to the throne had something else in mind. After some political experiments, he took state power in 1960. On December 15, 1960, he dissolved the elected parliament and dismissed the cabinet headed by Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala (BP), first elected prime minister of Nepal. He banned the political parties and introduced the party-less Panchayat system.

Initially, there was resistance to the takeover. Arvind Thakur was merely 18 when he was handed out life imprisonment. Durganand Jha was only 20 when he was executed. Dalsingh Magar was only 18 when he was killed. All those who voiced for democracy were ruthlessly crushed. But the spirit displayed by our martyrs did not die down. And it is the same spirit that has ushered in revolutions in Nepal.

Martyrs never die. They are a great source of inspiration for any nation. Societies that discredit their martyrs do so at their own peril. And martyrdom is pure. Brian Redhead said- "Martyrdom is not only defense; it is attack. It is not only defending the fate because it is persecuted by the State; it is attacking the State because the State is wrong in itself. Martyrs can be seen to be not only Against the State but Above the State."

King Birendra ascended the throne in 1972 after his father, King Mahendra died of a heart attack. Birendra was assumed to be a liberal monarch. He had attended Eton, Harvard and Tokyo Imperial University. It was believed Birendra was well exposed to western liberal thinking. People expected reforms to begin during his rule. Unfortunately, no such thing happened for a long time.

Meanwhile B.P Koirala returned to Kathmandu in 1976 from

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his eight years exile in India. B.P had been put behind bars for eight years after the coup-d'état in 1960. On BP's arrival, he faced a protest sponsored by the Panchayat government. The protestors beat up those who had gathered in support of the democratic leader. My father went to receive BP at the airport and had to bear the brunt of the Panchayat sponsored protest. BP strongly criticized the incident.

During 1976, Nepal was enmeshed in social and economic discontents. New generation was coming up and demanding freedom and democracy. Trouble was brewing. In 1972, the government introduced a new education plan which the students-with enrolment in colleges and universities ever on rise-opposed vehemently.

The plan had proposed adopting the semester system. A comprehensive examination system, entry tests for admission to a higher education level, and a higher fee structure were other components of the new plan. Students argued that the new plan would benefit only the upper middle class. So they agitated against the plan.

Formation of student unions in the colleges was also one of the demands of the students. In the end, government sponsored student organizations were allowed. Akhil Nepal Rastriya Swatantra Vidhyarthi Mandal (ANSRVM) was one such student body. The ANSRVM was used against the students who were close to the Nepali Congress and the communist parties. It was involved in beating opponents, hooliganism and even looting. The authorities shut their eyes to Mandal's activities.

Atrocities of Panchayat system was ever on increase. The Panchayat government increased taxes on land from Rs. 50 to Rs. 81 per bigha. This angered farmers in the southern plain who were up in arms against the government. Besides, the so-called Panchayat Development tax was imposed with a view to mobilizing local resources for development. The central grants-in-aid scheme was discontinued. Unfortunately; the tax system was reduced to a machinery to extort money from poor villagers without using it for development cause.

Panchayat was failing its own people. The government was not accountable to the people; it only served the interests of King. People involved in governance spent their time pleasing monarch. The system failed to frame an ideology or develop a philosophy. Panchayat gradually became an embodiment of suppression and failure.

April 6, 1979 was a turning point in the political history of Nepal. On this day, thousands of students gathered and proceeded towards the Pakistan embassy to protest the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The entire political spectrum was shocked at Bhutto's execution. Nepalese leaders in their statement expressed their anger towards such brutality.

Bhutto became the native martyr for Nepalese. He was a symbol of parliamentary democracy which was ruthlessly smothered by an authoritarian regime in Pakistan. Execution of Bhutto symbolized the death of parliamentary democracy that the Nepalese youth had been demanding for their own homeland.

For the Nepalese youth, Bhutto was no different from Captain Yagya Bahadur Thapa and Bhim Narayan Shrestha, who were shot dead by the Panchayat regime back in February 1978. The protest that erupted over Bhutto's execution was in fact a protest against the execution of Captain Yagya Bahadur Thapa and Bhim Narayan Shrestha.

Bhutto, Yagya Bahadur, Bhim Narayan and Mithilesh Dube were all the same- they sacrificed their lives for democratic freedom. Martyrs have no single nationalities. Gandhi, Lincoln, Mandela did not fight merely for the freedom of their people alone. Waging war against injustice, they liberated the entire humanity.

The Nepalese youth movement has derived its strength from the sacrifice of young martyrs. Durganand Jha, Dalsingh Magar, Mithilesh Dube, Yagya Bahadur Thapa, Bhim Narayan Shrestha all died in their youth. The youth of Nepal have displayed great courage and vigor during the fight for freedom several times.

Popular youth leader Gagan Thapa was put behind bars in 2003 under the state offence and sedition charge. Charge leveled

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on Gagan was the same as that leveled to martyr Yagya Bahadur way back in 1978. Men do die. Enthusiasm, vigor, sentiments, philosophy and spirit remains forever, which are ultimately passed from generation to generation. Yagya Bahadur Thapa died, but the cause for his fight kept inspiring the Nepalese youth.

The government relied heavily on the use of force to quell the student movement of 1979. But it proved counter-productive. Frustrations were wide-spread among the masses. During 1979, everything seemed normal at the surface, but undercurrent of apathy was mounting to such an extent that it was all set for a volcanic eruption. Therefore, due to the mounting pressure from all quarters, finally on May 24, 1979 King Birendra announced a referendum on whether people wanted a reformed Panchayat or multi-party democracy.

In fact, the seed of the end of monarchy was sown in 1960 when King Mahendra dismissed the elected government and took over executive powers. Till 1979, top leaders in Nepal believed that the monarchy had some role to play in the state of affairs. Even the 1990 pro-democracy movement assigned King a constitutional role. But just over one-and-a-half decades later, Nepal was declared a democratic republic. On June 11, 2008 King Gyanendra, brother of King Birendra, left a royal palace to begin his life as an ordinary Nepali.

People actively participated in the referendum of 1979 that was announced by King Birendra. Their hopes were high. Freedom was in the air. Political parties started campaigning. Press meets and public gatherings became common. Press censorship was lifted. Criticism against the monarch, though, was not tolerated.

The situation was more like India in 1977, when on January 18, Indira Gandhi, then prime minister of India, had ordered general elections, after 19 months of emergency rule. Nepalese, however, had lived in an emergency-like situation for 19 years. That was the notable difference.

Kirti Nidhi Bista resigned as the prime minister. Surya Bahadur Thapa replaced him. King Birendra ordered an

establishment of a National election commission to conduct a national referendum. He urged people to participate in referendum freely and fearlessly. All these steps were welcomed by several prominent democratic leaders.

Basically, politics is defined by ideologies. The Panchayat system lasted for 19 years. During all these years, it created its own base, leaders and cadres. Cadres loyal to King and the Panchayat were popular as 'Panches'. For the first time, these Panches were vehemently opposed to king's idea of referendum. They felt let down by King.

The Panches organized a conference with a view to consolidating their energy and campaigning in support of the Panchayat system. The Panchayat system, but lacked the political ideology. It was losing ground among the masses. The Panches could not command public sentiment. They started venting their frustration against their opponents.

The Akhil Nepal Rastriya Swatantra Vidyarthi Mandal was deployed for the purpose. Top leaders of various democratic parties were attacked, and public gatherings disturbed. Political cadres were chased and beaten up. Mandales played a huge role in turning the results of referendum in favor of reformed Panchayat. Demand of democratic leaders to disband the Mandal organization fell on deaf ears.

History has quite often repeated itself in Nepal. The Maoists used the Young Communist League (YCL) during the constituent assembly election in 2008. Method adopted by the YCL during the election was no different from the tactic of the Mandales during 1979 referendum.

The local leaders were tortured and thrashed by the YCL cadres during the constituent assembly election. Parties, other than the Maoist, demanded dissolution of the YCL in 2008. The democrats lost against the Maoist in 2008 in the same fashion as they lost against the Panchayat in 1979.

Both ordinary and extraordinary things have happened in Nepal's politics. But there has been one constant commonality

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during all the ups and downs-'Democracy and Democrats have been victimized'. The victimization of democracy is an ordinary thing in any authoritarian regime. What are extraordinary about Nepal is the communists and the palace together has victimized democracy and democrats again and again.

Until recently, radical communists and a palace shared a common philosophy in Nepal- 'anti-democratization'. Our history stands a testimony. Radical communists joined hands with Mandals to thwart the referendum in 1979. And during the 10-years of Maoist insurgency, top Maoists leaders openly claimed having a 'nationalistic alliance with king Birendra'.

When requested for a truce by legitimate ruling political forces during the insurgency, the Maoists leaders rejected talks with the political leaders, stating they would talk only with master (king) and not with servants (political parties).

In the midst of threats, fear, frustrations and hope, the referendum took place on April 2, 1980. Democrats lost the referendum. Out of 4,816,486 votes cast, Panchayat received 2,433,452 and the democrats 2,007,965. Political spectrum was shocked with the results. People said there had been widespread rigging in the election.

However; prominent democratic leader Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala (BP) accepted the result. Similar election result came out after 28 years in the Constituent Assembly elections. In the CA elections, democrats lost at the hand of the Maoists.

After the 1979 referendum, King Birendra formulated the Constitution Advisory Board to reform the constitution. Civil liberties and press freedom were curtailed through an ordinance. Political leaders expressed their dissatisfaction. Amending the 2019 constitution for the 3rd time in 1980, King Birendra equated all Nepalese with Panches and all Panches with Nepalese. The third amendment guaranteed adult franchise. Politicians were sharply divided over the amendments. Some hailed them while others condemned the move.

The end of 1981 witnessed an election of the Rastriya

Panchayat. The elections were open for all. But one had to be a member of some Panchayat organization to contest an election. The political parties and leaders were in dilemma. Question was whether to avail of the democratic achievements of 'adult franchise' guaranteed by the constitution or to boycott the elections citing the mandatory membership of Panchayat.

How could politicians stoop to obtain membership of an organization they had been fighting against for so long? A few political parties and individuals perceive it as an opportunity and capitalized it. A few others, like the Congress, boycotted it. My father was arrested in Dhanusha in the course of a boycott campaign.

On July 21, 1982 Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala died of cancer. A socialist leader of high repute in the entire region, he was recognized both nationally and internationally. Willy Brandt, Mao Zedong, Pundit Nehru, Ram Manohar Lohia and Khrushchev were some of his contemporaries and friends. The death of BP was a big set-back both to Nepali people and the socialist movement.



Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala final journey.

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Even after the demise of BP, attacks continued on democratic activists. After a silence of couple of years, finally on May 23, 1985, Nepali Congress decided to begin 'Satyagraha'. 'Satyagraha' movement was derived from the Gandhian philosophy. It was completely a non-violent protest.

Nepali Congress stated to pull off the movement if any violence takes place during the course of movement. Hundreds of Satyagrahis offered voluntary arrest, my father was one. There were far more prisoners then the prison cells could accommodate. The state owned go-downs were used for detention.



My father behind the bars in Malangwa prison in 1985 during the Satyagraha movement

'BAL (Kids) Satyagrahis' were mobilized in Dhanusha to add strength to the movement. In my first involvement in a democratic movement, I led a group of 'BAL Satyagrahis' in Janakpur. But I did not consciously choose to participate in the movement; I was merely eight years old. On Reflection, I feel my father deployed me to further the cause of democracy.

I was assigned to distribute pamphlets and leaflets together with few other childrens. Today, children are used in the armed

conflict. We disapprove it as it violates child rights. I think my father and his party colleagues violated my rights in 1985.

In Nepal, both democrats as well as communists have used children and youths to add force to their movement. The Maoists used them by handing down guns to fight 'tyrants'. Democrats handed them pamphlets. Only what was handed to them was the difference. The unpleasant truth is the 'use and abuse' of children both by democrats and communists. And trend continues even today.

When Satyagraha gathered momentum, bombs exploded in three places-in front of Narayanhiti Palace, National Panchayat and Annapurna hotel. Five people were killed. Ram Raja Prasad Singh, who was in self-imposed exile in India, claimed responsibility of explosions. Citing violence, Satyagraha was immediately withdrawn by Congress. A few Satyagrahis disappeared in 1985, and their whereabouts remain still unknown.

Dr. Laxmi Narayan Jha, Satyanarayan Sah, Iswor Lama, Padam Lama, Saket Chandra Mishra, Dilip Chaudhary, Maheswor Chaulagain, Bihari Lekhi, Dilip Narayan Chaudhary, Tapta Bahadur Karki are some of those who went missing since the days of Satyagraha. Ishwor Lama and Padam Lama were taken away from prison cells of Mahendranagar, Dhanusha. My father was on the same prison. I have been to that prison few times to meet my father before he was transferred to Malangwa prison.

Interestingly, Ram Raja Prasad Singh who assumed the responsibility of bomb explosions during the Satyagraha in 1985 was proposed as the first president of Nepal by the Maoist. Explosion took place at a time when the Satyagraha was gaining momentum. I am sure that Singh was aware of the consequences of an explosion. The Satyagraha was immediately called off due to a couple of bombs planted by Singh. He is yet to apologize for the death of five individuals caused by the explosions.

Our leaders, in general are poor managers. They have constantly failed to derive the best out of their own followers. They are least accountable to people. Many people have lost their lives

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due to injudicious decisions and irresponsible moves of party leaders. Forget the monarchs and Ranas, all those political parties that took up arms at some point of time in history are responsible for the deaths of thousands.

Nepali history is a living testimony that the Congress, United Marxist Leninist, and Maoists, all took up arms. And they have never apologized with the families of victims for the deaths. Those who seek freedom at the cost of other's tears are finally submerged into their own.

One thing I have always failed to understand is how armed movements free its people. How is society free when it is overpowered with the psychic of fear? Can violence secure freedom? For me, violence always overwhelms freedom. Nepal has witnessed several movements during the last six decades. Have these movements been able to free the citizens of this country? No.

People of Nepal are not free. We are enslaved by violence. Violence has become an integral part of our life. Our state is violent. Our bureaucracy is violent. Our political parties are violent. Our society is violent. One class is violent against another. One caste is violent against another. Our education system is violent. Our social structure and the values we uphold are violent. Violence permeates our life. So how can we be free?

We are the victims of our own making. We crave for power and pray for it. Nepali society has a deep rooted proclivity towards politics and wealth. Wealth and power are seen as complementary to each other. Success is measured in terms of political connection and material collection. Wealth is more powerful, it can buy power. Knowledge and skills take a back seat. Any attempt to wage war against violence by means of knowledge is futile.

Ours is a totalitarian state. Only under a totalitarian regime, the entire society becomes political. It becomes a playing field for competing political "isms". Nepali society is marked by political schism; we have been divided into various 'isms'. We have Feudalism, Capitalism, Socialism, Democracy and Communism with diverse shades. Carl Jung said, "All isms are lethal". We have

everything that is poisonous. What we sorely lack is peace and prosperity.

In an interview with an Indian Journalist Bhola Chatterji, B.P remarked- "An authoritarian regime, wherever it is, makes it clear to its people that if you want to live with dignity you have to be in prison. So, the place for a man with dignity in an authoritarian regime is in prison. There alone can he hold his head high. Outside the prison he has no dignity, no humanity. He is just a slave. He is a subject-not a citizen." We are subjects in our own country. We are slaves to our own follies.

Even after Nepal has been declared a democratic republic, Nepalese are living like slaves in their own country. They are slaves to the political parties, their leaders, their 'isms', their thoughts, social structure and social systems. Entrenched corruption and lawlessness have decimated this nation. Humanity has been slain. And dignity buried so deep- a Nepali walks with no soul.

Dr. Alexis Carrell observed that it is not so important to add years to life as it is to add life to years. And we Nepalese have been adding only years to our lives.

We have been overburdened by 'isms'. The 'isms' have created disorder in our life. Anarchy has become a way of our life. How can people claim themselves free when they infringe on each other's rights and privileges? In the name of exercising our rights, we violate the rights of others. The country has been polarized in terms of class, caste and ideologies.

Ideological indoctrinations have divided ordinary people of our land. How are we free unless we get rid of these indoctrinations? Aren't the present-day humanists waging war against these radical indoctrinations throughout the globe?

The imperious stance of the United States led a democracy to wage war against Iraq and Afghanistan. Islam extremists have unleashed a 'Jihad', killing innocent Christians and others. Intolerant attitude of some Hindu fundamentalists has given a bad name to Hinduism. Chinese obsession with economic progress has led to an environmental degradation that might cause havoc to

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whole of humanity. The Nepalese armed revolution has unleashed anarchy and frustration.

The aim of politics is to upgrade the quality of human lives. But Lives mean little vis-à-vis politics. It becomes merely a part of revolution. Ironically, deaths do count. It is the number of deaths that guarantees the success of any armed revolutions. And we are obsessed with deaths and killings, not with love and peace, for our success. Values that seek cooperation, dignity, unity, respect do not hold meaning in modern politics.

Modern global politics has been marked with both internationalism and tribalism. Internationalism has made world a global village. Globalization is a process that binds a world together. Tribalism is an antithesis to globalization. It glorifies local identity and dignity. Contemporary world is plagued due to conflict between internationalism and tribalism. Only a harmonious relationship between the two can guarantee permanent peace. Accepting co-existence of all is the only way to lead everyone to prosperity.

By the mid-1980s, Western democracies were getting exhausted. Issues of terrorism, migration, high population growth were coming to the forefront. On the other hand, era of democratization rapidly began in the third world countries. Many countries in the third world were also adopting liberal economic policies. Market was opening up fast. 'Growth' assumed centre stage on the economic front. And people were put at the centre of that growth.

Transfer of culture, technology and innovation was on the rise. The world entered the post-capitalist era. Labor and capital were not the source of productivity anymore; technology and knowledge were. Never ever in the history of human civilization was change taking place so rapidly. Peter Drucker called it the end of 'another kind of history'.

The world was changing very rapidly. Some called it an 'emerging new world order'. Others called it a 'world in transition'. Nepal was still struggling for democracy. The society was restless. The country was looking for avenues to open up to the world that was changing at such a high speed.

The Nepali Congress called its national conference in January 1990 and declared a movement against the Panchayat regime. The communist forces were ready to join hands. Seven communist parties formed a 'United Left Front' to launch a joint movement with Congress. Agitation began on February 18, 1990.

On the first day of the movement, the entire nation came to a halt. Agitators clashed with police at many places. The Panchayat regime resorted to full-fledged suppression. All top democratic and left leaders were arrested. Students were beaten up and tortured. The press was threatened. Despite the unfavorable condition, people throughout a country rose up for democracy.

Protests in Pokhara, Hetauda, Narayanghat, Biratnagar, Janakpur, Jadhukuha, Bhaktapur, Palpa, Mahottari, Dang, Jhapa, Birgunj, Patan, Kirtipur, Lumbini and many other places fueled the movement. Doctors, professors, journalists, human rights activists, students, farmers, women, laborers, bureaucrats and others were up against the autocratic polity.

Politically my hometown Janakpurdham has always been highly sensitive. Janakpur has always been in the forefront during revolutions. The 'Jadhukuha incident' jolted the entire nation during 1990 movement. Jadhukuha is a small village, 10 kilometers from Janakpur. Five people- Ramnarayan Yadav, Sonadevi Yadav, Bhuvanesworidevi Yadav, Janakidevi Yadav and Uday shankar Yadav- attained martyrdom in the Jadhukuha incident.

My whole family actively participated in the 1990 movement. My mother and two elder sisters, Shipra and Sweta were both active through the women's division. My eldest sister, Shipra continued herself in politics even during her college days, and later in bar association. I was involved as a student.

Bimlendra Nidhi was underground and was hiding in our house for a specific time. Nidhi, currently a general secretary of Nepali Congress, was leading the movement in Janakpur. Once when he was hiding in our house for few days, I asked him- "Uncle, what will you do if the police came now in search of you?" He looked at me, smiled and replied, "I will put on a sari and sneak away."

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Final procession of the 8th of April in Janakpur was led by my father and late Dr. Dhruba Prasad Sharma. Both were arrested and tortured. Finally, on the same day at around 11.15 PM king Birendra bowed in front of movement and Nepal was declared a democratic country with constitutional monarchy.

Journalist, Mr. Kanak Mani Dixit once expressed his inquisitiveness on the whereabouts of thousands of those freedom fighters who actively participated during 1990 movement. I am not quite sure where all those heroes are today. But my father, who was one among them lives with me. My father resisted to submit himself in front of the autocratic leadership of his party. A man who provided Congress membership to the first president of Nepal, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav has been today sidelined by his own party leaders.

Standing against dictatorship of the party president, Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala was considered a crime within the Congress party. My father committed that crime. And till date he has not submitted for the stand he took all his life. Those central leaders who led people like my father has already shook hand with Girija's interest, but he remains same.

For many, he is a failed politician. For me, he is a symbol of unflinching political courage never to submit or yield. For me, he is a successful leader who has tirelessly worked to upgrade the lives of common people in his constituency. I am indebted to Shiva Khara for not defining success through the position in life, but through the obstacles that are overcome in the process.

For me, my father is therefore what Milton once said-

*".....unmoved, Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number, nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth or change his constant mind."*

1990 movement lasted for 49 days. It is unknown how many died in a movement. The official figures claimed 49, whereas German Radio 300 and hospital sources-500. After a movement the interim government was formed under the leadership of the

Nepali Congress. Some of the prime functions of government were to conduct an election, maintain peace and draft the constitution.

The parliamentary democracy in 1990 opened up Nepal's window to outside world. Reforms were simultaneously introduced. Media witnessed rapid development. Community radio stations, television channels and daily news papers were on rise. An ordinary Nepalese access to information and foreign employment grew.

The infrastructures were developed. By 2005, total road length increased from 376 kilometers to 17,217 kilometers, including 4,781 kilometers paved, 4,703 kilometers gravel-covered, and 7,643 kilometers classified as fair weather roads. The total road length also included 3,028.7 kilometers of national highways.

New banks were opened. By 2005 Nepal had 17 commercial banks with 382 branches, 18 insurance companies, 20 financial cooperatives, 59 finance companies, and 25 development banks, with 11 offering micro credit services; 47 nongovernmental organizations were licensed to be intermediaries for micro credit services.

From 1960 to 2004, the Nepal Rastriya Bank's total assets grew from US\$11.2 million to US\$4.2 billion. As of July 2005, 128 companies were listed on the Nepal Stock Exchange.

In social front, there was a sharp rise on civil society activities. The Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) were proliferated. Hundreds of International Non-government Organizations started operating in Nepal.

The schools and colleges of good standards were opened. There has been a steady progress in the status of education. The children from 6 to 12 age group are provided tuition free education. Adult literacy rate increased from 20.6 percent to 48.6 percent from 1981 to 2001. Enrollments of female students increased in schools. From 30 percent it grew to 45.9 percent in between 1990 to 2004.

By 2004, Nepal had 26,277 schools, 6,018,806 students, and 147,677 teachers. By 2001 higher education institutions included eight public and 114 private technical schools, one polytechnic school, and six universities. Unfortunately; the facilities of education

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are over concentrated in urban areas. Ordinary citizens were provided with choices. During 1990 what ordinary people did not have was a capital and a capacity to grab available choices.

The health indicators have suggested some improvements since 1990. By 2002 Nepal's Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.504 up from 0.291 in 1975. By 2003, Nepal had 10 health centers, 83 hospitals, 700 health posts, and 3,158 sub-health posts. In 2000 government funding for health matters was approximately US\$2.30 per person.

In Nepal, the prevalence of disease is higher than any South Asian countries. Leading diseases and illnesses include diarrhea, gastrointestinal disorders, goiter, intestinal parasites, leprosy, and tuberculosis. Nepal also had high rates of child malnutrition-72 percent in 2001. Around 60,000 persons aged 15 to 49 had human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in 2003.

The economic growth rate increased to 5.5%. Nepal's economic space was largely confined to and dominated by India and China prior to 1990. But liberal economic policy was adopted since 1990. The markets were open and the state industries were privatized. The joint-venture projects were launched. Nepalese economy has been largely agricultural dependent.

In the past, the agriculture sector employed most of the labor force and provided the largest share of gross domestic product (GDP). But since 1970 there has been a steady decline. From 1965 to 2004 the agricultural sector declined from 65.5 percent of GDP to nearly 40.3 percent.

Moreover, the percentage of the labor force employed in agriculture fell from 94.4 percent in 1971 to 65.7 percent in 2001. As a result of low agricultural growth rates and high population growth rates, Nepal has not been self-sufficient in food grain production since 1980s.

From 1962 to 2002, the total agricultural area increased by 57 percent, and number of landholdings grew 120 percent, but the population increased by 146 percent. In the same period, the amount of agricultural land declined from 0.18 to 0.13 hectares per

person, and the average size of holdings declined from 1.1 to 0.8 hectares.

Nepal is plagued with the regional unbalanced development. High dependence on foreign aid is the characteristic feature of Nepal's economy. Fewer people have been employed by industry and manufacturing. The industry has contributed less to GDP. The service sector, particularly tourism has grown.

The tourism has remained an important component of Nepal's economy. Tourist expenditures grew from US\$43.2 million in 1980 to US\$162.4 million in 2001, declined sharply to US\$102.3 million in 2002 but recovered to US\$166.8 million in 2004. Similarly, the number of tourist arrivals increased from 163,000 in 1980 to 492,000 in 1999 but declined to 288,356 in 2004.

Nepal's imports of goods and services grew from US\$102.4 million in 1965 to US\$1.8 billion in 2004. From 1965 to 2004, imports of goods and services increased as a percentage of gross domestic products from 13.9 percent to 31.7 percent, averaging 20.7 percent for the 1965–2004 periods.

Exports of goods and services grew from US\$57.1 million in 1965 to US\$712 million in 2004 and increased as a percentage of gross domestic products from 7.8 percent to 16.8 percent, averaging 13.2 percent for the period. Major exports include garments, carpets, grain, vegetable oil (ghee), pashmina wool, jute goods, and leather goods.

From 1960 to 2004 total GDP grew from US\$1.4 billion to US\$6.2 billion. It was a 3.6 percent annual growth. From 1965 to 2004 the agricultural sector decreased from 65.5 percent to 40.3 percent of GDP. The services increased from 23.5 percent to 36.7 percent of GDP while manufacturing from 3.3 percent to 9 percent. The industry has increased from 7.7 percent to 14 percent.

Occupational pattern for Nepal has largely changed. During 1976-77 agriculture was dominant with 94.73%, government services- 3.44%, industrial labor- 2.19% and trade and business- 0.1%. More than 90% of country's national income was derived

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from agriculture. In recent years the urban labor force participation in agricultural and related occupation has slowed down.

Successive Nepalese governments have grown its expenditures. From 1972 to 2004, government's total expenditures grew from US\$879 million to US\$1.2 billion. From 1972 to 2000, fiscal deficits increased from US\$125 million to US\$12 billion but declined to US\$208 million by FY2004. Inflation averaged nearly 9 percent from 1965 to 2000.

Government debt has grown substantially since 1970s. Central government debt was 5.9 percent of gross domestic product in 1975, 66.2 percent in 1995, that decreased to 51.8 percent in 2004. In dollar amounts, external debt was US\$33.7 million in 1975, US\$2.4 billion in 1995, and US\$3.5 billion in 2004. Outstanding foreign loans totaled US\$3.2 billion in 2004.

In fact, Nepal made a remarkable progress in road construction, communications, literacy rates, and health services since 1990. Unfortunately; most of these developments concentrated in urban areas and were exploited by elites of all sections of society.

Rural population still lack basic amenities such as drinking water, health services, and transportation facilities. Various domestic agencies that are in charge of development projects have been severely criticized for their poor and often ineffective organization.

Simultaneously, Nepal entered an era of entrenched corruption since 1990. There was a corruption in politics, bureaucracy, media and development. The corruption became a way of Nepali life. The political parties soon forgot to institutionalize the achievements of movement and ran rampant for power. Horse-trading became a common practice of parliamentary democracy. Nepotism and favoritism became the order of the day.

Many top leaders, ministers and bureaucrats were considered corrupt. Political parties and leaders failed their own people. The successive prime ministers dissolved parliaments for their personal benefits. The major political parties were divided due to intra-party

wrangling. The successive governments could not deliver public welfare. The political parties in oppositions also acted irresponsibly. In no time, there was a decline in the credibility of political parties and a democratic system.

With the growing disparity and ever rising negative political trends, expectations of common people crumbled. People frustrations were mounting. Beginning of 1990 was a great moment for Nepal. It was ushering in democracy. But by the end of the 1990, Nepal witnessed the death of democracy. Since the democratic institutions were not firmly rooted, their legitimacy was questioned. Decade of irresponsibility, indecision and infighting left us in turmoil.

Amidst turmoil, uncertainties and frustrations, Mao Zedong was re-born in Nepal. It dawned to me that Mao's soul could not rest in peace for 20 years. Mao died in China in 1976. His political ideology was reincarnated in Nepalese soil in 1996. Maoism died in China when it was inching towards modernity. Ironically, the same Maoism surfaced in Nepal promising modernity. For China, Maoism was considered anti development. In Nepal it was propagated as the only means for salvation. What a paradox!

With Mao and his philosophy, Nepal entered yet another crisis. For some, his birth was to counter crisis. For others, it was anti-development. For some, it was real development. For some, it was revolutionary. For others, it was anti-revolutionary. For some, it was a permanent peace. For others, it was violent.

For some, it was a social revolution. For others, it was anti-social. For some, it was to dismantle today for bright tomorrow. For others, dismantling today was not a solution. For some, it was destruction for real construction. For others, it was utter madness to construct through destruction.

The Maoist exploited sufferings of the under-privileged population for their gain. Liberal democrats could not extend their gain to the under-privileged population. Finally after 10 years of struggle, violence, death and destruction; consensus was reached.

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The twelve point's accord was signed between the Maoists and the political parties in 2005 in New Delhi, India.

The signing of the consensual accord between the parliamentary parties and the rebel automatically isolated King Gyanendra who grabbed absolute state power in 2003. In 2006, all the political forces agitated together against king's direct rule. It was the beginning of a movement that has been popularly termed- 'April uprising'.

An April uprising lasted for 19 days. 18 ordinary citizens attained martyrdom. It was the first political movement of my life where I consciously choose to actively participate. I was already adult. The youth leader Gagan Thapa, Subodh and I were together in my flat in Kathmandu for 19 consecutive days during the movement.

My friend Ajay Siwakoti who is a journalist by profession used to join us sometimes. I remember the day when we broke the curfew in Anamnagar. All of us were together in the procession. Ajay went straight to one of the army standing in the street and shook hand with him. It was an indication that democracy is for all Nepalese.

Ajay is a staunch democrat and a man of high spirit. Unfortunately; today he is fighting against cancer but only with a high spirit. He has involved himself in a campaign to pressurize the political parties for timely constitution making.

The Nepali Congress had assigned Gagan to unleash agitation in the Anamnagar area. Since I used to stay in the apartment near Anamnagar, I participated in the movement along with Gagan and my other colleagues. Every day I, Gagan and Subodh used to leave the apartment by 10 o'clock in the morning and participate in the procession.

Gagan always led the movement by remaining at the forefront. He has an extraordinary quality of making people trust him. I have always trusted his capacities. We know each other since 1997, when he was only the general secretary of the Tri-Chandra College student union.

During my higher secondary schooling, I was an average student. In fact, I have always been an average student my entire life. During schooling, my ambition was to focus on study, get good grades and travel abroad for my higher studies. I received decent marks in the final school exams, but an indecent response from my father. He shouted at me- 'Do you think you can excel in life only by reading text books? Why don't you take part in extra-curricular activities? Why don't you join politics? Take your studies and extra-curricular activities simultaneously'.

My father words have always served as guidelines for me. I joined the Tri-Chandra College, hot-bed of student politics. I met Gagan at the Tri-Chandra College. During our college days, once I told him- 'I think the day will come when you will be a great leader of this country. And I will help you further groom your potentialities in my own capacity'.

In fact, we always helped each other helping each other grow on our career. During the college election, Gagan contested for the presidency, whereas I contested as a member. Both of us represented the Nepal student Union, youth wing organization of the Nepali Congress. And we won the election with thumping votes.

Nineteen days April movement pressurized King Gyanendra to reinstate the parliament that was dissolved by him. Parliament was reinstated and the interim government formed. The Maoists joined the government. Girija Prasad Koirala once again became a prime minister. The date for the election of the Constituent assembly was announced. Nepal's interim parliament stripped off king's credentials. 'His Majesty Government of Nepal' was changed to 'Government of Nepal'.

And Nepal was declared a secular state. However; the achievements merely remained confined within the constitution. The ordinary Nepalese could not realize the impact of such a huge political transformation. In spite of the demise of monarchy, the political leaders and the political parties were reluctant for inclusive transformation.

Amid such frustration, the Madhesh movement began in 2007

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to counter the reluctant attitude displayed by our leaders for an inclusive transformation. One of the important demands of the movement was 'federalism'.

The Madhesh is a low land that falls on the southern part of Nepal. Some claim it 'Madhesh', but some others, 'Terai'. The Madhesh is an exclusive concept. It only incorporates people with distinct culture and practices. The Terai is all encompassing. It values all people residing within the southern territory of Nepal. The Terai has always remained isolated from the state. Nepali state has discriminated Terai. The attitude, belief system and practices of Nepali state have alienated people of Terai.

Historically, Terai has remained neglected. The ordinary people of Terai have always been looked upon as the third citizens. Equal rights and opportunities were denied to them. But the time has changed now. The movement spearheaded by the ordinary people of Terai has changed the prevailing psychic and mind-sets of the entire nation.

No more are they looked upon as inferiors. Neither could they be neglected in the decision-making process of today's Nepal. With their own determination, they have contributed immensely to Nepal's social and political process. Socially, they have challenged the norms, attitudes and relations of various layers and actors within the larger society.

Politically, they have compelled the state to adopt 'federal' structure which otherwise was a distant dream until recently. The Terains have therefore, now acquired the centre stage of the Nepali politics.

The entire nation must salute the contribution that Terains made to enhance the socio-political process of Nepal and apologize with them for the injustices and oppressions they went through at the hands of the state and ruling classes. The positive outputs brought forward by the Terai movement must be acknowledged and institutionalized for the betterment of Nepal.

Unfortunately; movement had negative effect also. Movement was waged for equal dignity and inclusion of Madhesis in the

mainstream. But the movement was not collective in nature. It created a bitter wall, mistrust and divide between Pahadis, Madhesis, Tharus and minor communities within the Terai.

The movement failed to streamline and advocate collective agenda agreeable to all communities residing within Terai. In the name of movement, houses and properties of Pahadis were looted and burnt. Due to threats and trauma, many Pahadis migrated from the southern plain of Nepal and became migrants in their own country.

The movement that was aimed to emancipate the Madhesis, Dalits, Janjatis and women of today ended-up establishing Madhesis, Dalits, Janjatis and women for tomorrow. Those ordinary Pahadis, Tharus and other minority groups living in the Terai for centuries that were compelled to leave their homes and properties are in fact Madhesis, Dalits, Janjatis and women of tomorrow.

Make no mistake- liberation movement must aim to liberate in entirety; otherwise one movement makes the ground for others and society plunge in the vicious cycles of movement unable to liberate anyone. Indian socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohiya has rightly put it, 'liberation movements should not only aim to restore rights but sound character too'. So the real question is this: Are our social movements aiming to restore both rights and character?

After the movement, failure of Madhesi political and social leadership to de-radicalize Madhesi society has further aggravated the situation. Unable to meet the challenge that prevails within Madhesi society, Madhesi leaders have become more and more radical contributing to ongoing violence and crime.

In center, they want to portray themselves more radicals only to retain their constituencies. In their constituencies, they cannot denounce and condemn either the violence or the actors and organizations involved in institutionalizing violence only to use them for their further political aims.

It is the failure of Terai leaders that has helped in grooming and institutionalization of crime and violence in the southern periphery

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of our country. One can easily find an intrinsic political relationship between Madheshi leaders and criminals who have covered their face politically.

Why cannot leadership talk about fostering the richness of Madhesi art, culture, language and literature? Can political agenda alone prosper the quality of lives? What about the economic development? Why those agendas that can help foster understanding between various communities are not our priorities? Is it because the political leadership loses its radical legitimacy by fostering knowledge, understanding, culture and art?

Why cannot leaders address the underlying conflicting issues in relation to caste and gender that is so entrenched in Terai? Are there any Madhesi political and social leaders who have renounced the dowry system? Madhesi leaders seek change in the state structure and political power relations, but they are unwilling to change themselves to address underlying social ills that are deeply rooted within the society of Terai.

Nepali leaders are committing crimes of various magnitudes against their own people. Unable to guide people towards greater achievements, our leaders in general are radicalizing the society. Nepali radicalism finds its premise less from historical exploitation and injustices, but more from the self narrow interest.

The radicalism that is borne out of injustice serves the larger interest of society. But the radicalism borne out of the individual selfish interest is a threat to a secular and democratic society.

Such radicalism fuels violence, crime and anarchy. Today Nepal's political radicalism is synonymous to extortions, death, killings, abductions, violence, crime and anarchy. How can such radicalism help Madhesh achieve dignity, prosperity and development- important question that every Madhesi should ask their leaders.

Therefore, a completely new approach has to be developed in order to address ills facing societies in Terai. A talk must begin between social activists, civil society groups, various communities and moderators who are confident in institutionalizing the Madhesh

movement in its collectivity, at the one hand, and those who believe that a democratic and non-violent Madhesh is a prerequisite for the prosperity of Madhesh, at the other.

A prosper Madhesh is a boon for Nepal. A wall of mistrust that has been built because of the thoughts and actions of 'Pahadi' nationalist and 'Madheshi' violent radicals serves the well-being of neither the Madhesh or of Nepal.

There is an unseen dangerous wall that has divided communities of our country today. Walls based on greed, hypocrisy, ego, hatred, divide and 'benefits of few rulers' belonging to both sides of the fence must be replaced with respect, understanding and development for each other.

Wall must fall. For this, handful of believers from both sides who can respect individuals devoid of language, class, caste, culture, religion, sex and region must address the issue collectively. We must emphasize on 'equal rights for all' and 'equal responsibility by all'. One should not compromise with bad faith in the absence of good ones.

My hometown, Janakpur is a heartland of Terai. Janakpur is a town with rich tradition, culture and literature. It is also known as 'Mithila'. Goddess Sita is also named 'Mithila' in Hindu scripture. Mythological stories suggest that Janakpur is named after Goddess Sita.

'Maithili' language is frequently used in Janakpur as a general mode of conversation. Ordinary people speaking 'Maithili' language and practicing a distinct culture of 'Mithili' are the indigenous people of Janakpur.

Since I am born and brought up in Janakpur, I have many Madhesi friends. Unfortunately; I do not belong to Madhesh as defined in today's political discourse. My forefathers are 'Pahadi'-people from hill. My grandfather migrated to Janakpur.

Personally, I have not been to hill, my ancestral place even once. But today I do not belong to Madhesh either. In present day Nepal, I have been left with no regional identity. I am a displaced in my own country.

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Revolutions that have taken place many a time in Nepal guarantying its citizens their identity and prosperity, have left its citizen with none. If revolutions and social movements are meant for collective identity- where is my identity? What is my identity? Many hill origins ordinary people have migrated from Terai. Thousands of Nepali people are today an internal migrant in their own country.

Recollecting his childhood memoirs, Amartya Sen beautifully captures how human beings transformed themselves to monsters during the Hindu-Muslim riot that took place in India in 1940, just for the sake of their identity. That shocking experience could never escape his mind.

It was difficult for him to convince himself about the madness that was displayed both by Hindus and Muslims in the name of religion. In his classical book, 'Identity and violence', he questions- how is it possible for human beings living together for centuries to kill each other only for the sake of their religion? How could a single variable 'religion' define a community or individual in its entirety?

Social movements must be cooperative, driven by combined strength towards collective transformation. Our social movements are neither collective initiatives nor collective transformations. Dalits have excluded other caste groups. Madhesis have excluded non-Madhesis. Women have excluded Men. Indigenous people have excluded others in their movement.

All these social movements are for inclusion and equal rights and dignity. How can movement achieve inclusion when it begins with exclusion? How can movement achieve respect when it shows disrespect towards others? How can movement achieve a common purpose when its purpose are only limited to a single caste, community or ethnicity?

Is it not true that providing opportunities only for community leaders of the deprived ethnicity means depriving other ethnic communities/ leaders from the same opportunity? Are we not facilitating the creation of oppressed classes for tomorrow in our process of emancipating the oppressed classes of today? Is this not a vicious cycle? Or a survival of our politics and business only depend

upon creating of one of such deprived communities and classes that could prevail in any name at any point of time in history?

Identity based movements are both constructive and destructive in nature. It is constructive because it ensures the rights for certain individuals and communities. It is destructive because during a process of ensuring rights for certain groups and community, it excludes other groups and communities from same rights and privileges. It is destructive because it confines identity of an individual or community within certain limited sphere, defining them with a singular variable.

An individual is not composed of singular identity alone, but with multiple of identities. A Madhesi young can be Paswan, Yadav or Jha. He/ She can either speak Maithili or Awadhi. He/ She can be part of any regional or national political parties. He/ She can either adhere to his belief for dowry or could just stand firmly against such cultural practices. An individual is not only shaped by location or looks, but also by their personal thoughts, languages, sex, religion and politics. Same is true with community, caste and class.

A Muslim King Akbar was liberal as compared to Aurangzeb. Akbar gave space for minority rights and ensured religious freedom for all. Aurangzeb on the other hand killed all those who were not Muslims. Both the Kings were Muslims, read Koran and were part of same culture, Islam. Yet both were fundamentally different in their approaches and actions.

A Madhesi leader could be a liberator and as well as despot. An ethnic leader can be honest towards its community and as well a traitor against it. A Khas Pahadi could be a hard-core nationalist suppressing other communities and as well a reformist respecting everyone. How rationale and scientific would it be to hate the entire community for injustice perpetuated by an individual or certain interest groups?

An Individual is a source and extension of many lives. Individuals compose family, neighborhood, associations, community, society and nation. An Individual is, but not a singular

entity. It has few elements- body, mind and spirit. A well grown individual lives in harmony with body, mind and spirit.

A body is a weapon or means that act to achieve. A body is machine. A robust machine is vital for productivity. A mind calculates and determines how to act. It is a reservoir of all resources, therefore carves out the best strategy for a body. It lays values, principles and philosophies for action. The spirit is life energy. It regulates both mind and body.

Mind keeps growing. It gets influenced by larger context and forces operating in society. Spirit tames the mind on what information needs to be acquired, processed and digested. It also helps mind in rejecting information that are deemed unnecessary in processing one's own life. Spirit processes, mind crystallizes and body acts.

Purpose, desire and impulses are all part of individual. What needs to be grown at what proportion is what body, mind and spirit decides. A well balanced individual has, therefore a well proportionately balanced purpose, desire and impulse.

Impulses are of two kinds- positive and Negative. Those who act with positive impulses are innovator, creator and peace seeker. Negative impulses are violent. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Mandela are the symbol of positive impulses; whereas Hitler is a negative.

Family, associations, community, society, nation and world play a vital role in shaping individual. Family has few basic roles- sexual, economic, reproductive, and education. Family fulfils the sexual urge through marriage. It also serves individual through education. Through education, individual gathers life values and intellect.

Capital can be generated by blending life values like 'hard work' and 'intellect'. Capital is what promotes economy. Reproductive function that is so vital for the continuation of society is managed by family. Family procures, adding more new members. An additional member contributes through similar process.

Association is a public life. There are many associations that operate in society. As a social being, human instinctively wants to be associated. They tend to associate with same age groups, or with certain clubs, or with certain professional organizations. An individual is, therefore not merely a part of family or community. It tends to associate itself with various other groups or sub-groups in society that best suits its interest.

Community is a group of people who share larger communality among each other. Community would have few things in common- ethnicity, language, culture, social systems and social practices among others. Word community is 'communal' in nature. It is both inclusive and exclusive. It is inclusive because it accommodates aspirations of the members of own community. It is exclusive because it accommodates 'only' aspirations of members of same community, excluding rest of the others.

Almost all societies in the world are stratified. Some are stratified in line with culture and religion, whereas some others are stratified in line with economy and politics. Stratification has existed since the beginning of human existence and will remain unless society exists. Challenge is not to dismantle the structure of stratifications; but to increase the political, economic, social, and cultural access for everyone.

Through such access; socio-economic, political and cultural variables that stratifies society, ultimately gets blurred. Societal growth cannot be confined on the premise of any 'single' variable. Unfortunately; Nepalese society has been largely regulated and dominated by politics.

Nepalese political society has remained unstable since the inception of modern Nepal. Why? For the last two centuries, majority of Nepalese that have thrived are those who have closely associated themselves to politics. Solely politics has been avenues for growth for a long time. Though unstable, politics itself is profitable in Nepal. This is because everyone wants to capitalize profit through politics. However; political profit is necessarily not

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limited to a monetary aspect. Social status and political power are equally valued in our part of world.

Stratification made on the basis of any 'single' component of society, polity or economy is likely to witness little growth. Samuel P Huntington categorized the entire world through 'civilizations' lens. I wonder how innovative would that world be! How can it be possible to categorize ordinary people only as Muslims or Christians?

There could be many Christians who might be convinced with Islam and there could be many Muslims who might disagree with a 'holy war'. A Christian cannot be a Christian alone. A Christian could be a part of any associational groups and sub-groups that operate in society. And same is true with Muslims.

Similarly, justifying his thesis on class struggle Marx proclaimed: "History of human civilization hitherto is a history of class struggle." First, society is not categorized or partitioned along the lines of class alone. Second, history of human civilization is not only of class struggle, but also of class cooperation. Cooperation has never been Marx's priority. If he would have prioritized it, one can imagine about the fate of his thesis that has been built on the premise of conflict.

Marxism therefore is a half lie for it ignores the half truth. It categorized the society only through the lens of 'conflict' in a same fashion as Huntington categorized the world through the lens of 'civilizations'. Functionalists are equally wrong to stress that only 'cooperation' has been underlying feature of society. Communitarians are at false in only emphasizing 'community' as the ultimate truth. Ethnicists and linguists are equally wrong for overemphasizing 'ethnicity' and 'language' as a just measurement.

Civilization, conflict, cooperation, ethnicity, language, community are variables and determinants that exist within larger societies at different proportions. Society operates through these determinants. All these are equally important. One overlaps and influences the other. 'Multiple identities' is a fundamental feature of

any existing society. In such a context, how can those who live within a realm of larger society claim to have a singular identity?

Gora is a protagonist in Rabindranath Tagore's novel titled 'Gora' and is a staunch Hindu hardliner. He justifies customs, values and norms practiced by hard-core Hindus. In the beginning of novel, Gora resembles a 'fanatic Hindu' who is willing to serve Hinduism with all his means.

At the end of a novel, he is exposed to the truth by his reared mother that he is not a Hindu but has been adopted by a Hindu family as his Irish parents were killed by the rebellion Indian armies in the anti-British mutiny of 1857.

At one stroke, Gora is compelled to question his own beliefs that he has been holding for so long. His previous identity crumbles in front of his own eyes. Through Gora- Tagore hammers and questions the legitimacy that is attached with the issues of identity. Gora is exposed to a fundamental question- whether he should keep continue his identity as a 'Hindu fanatic' or adopt his 'Irish' identity?

At the end of the novel, he chooses to remain a human, neither an Irish nor a Hindu. An Individual is a by-product of the context and loves to relate itself with the identity of their choices, priorities and interests.

Singular identity divides. It is centralization and therefore anti-development. It confines and coerces the choices of individuals. It cannot help individual grow and realize their freedom. Singular identity is therefore anti-freedom. Plural identity means identifying with others. That means relating with others and understanding others' point of view.

Multiple identities bridge a difference. This is more inclusive and democratic. Plurality is more like a federation. It is decentralization. Individual's singular identity must be harmonized with a plural. That is only way to maintain harmony in a society.

People in general can have identity of own choices. They could be British, Americans, Germans Chinese or Nepalese. They

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could be young or old. They could be male or female. They could be Pahadi or Madhesi. They could be Gurungs or Tamangs. They could be Dalit or Brahmins. They could be communist or democrat. One could be anything one wants to.

As for me, I have no singular identity and neither am I inclined to have one of it. Having pluralities of identities is to have a unique identity in itself. My life's framework has not been designed for academicians study. It is for me to live. And I can live with or without any identity. It does not bother me.

Does it bother academicians, fundamentalists, politicians and community leaders who thrive on identity based issues? Does it make me inconsistent or confused? Is consistency means sticking with one thing and developing a single brand and identity? If consistency and clear headed is synonymous to fanaticism, I have no hesitation to claim myself as one of the most inconsistent and confused man.

Our identity does not grow alone with a specific variable, set-up or in a linear sequence. History and traditions play important role in inculcating identities. And as we grow we should not be necessarily living within it. My identity has a seed of the past which has been blended with present. As world blends more in future, I will harmonize my identity with world. Formally; this would be a beginning of an end. But with only such an end, mankind can have a new beginning.

Recently there had been a proliferation of ethnic movements in Nepal. Amidst social and ethnic movement, election of the constituent assembly finally took place on 10th of April 2008. The Maoist became a leading party followed by the Nepali Congress and the United Marxist Leninist. Regional political forces like Madhesi Janadhikar Forum and Tarai Madhesh Loktantrik Party emerged through election. Today Nepal's constituent assembly reflect the inclusivity that may not be found anywhere in world.

The Maoist won 220 seats out of 601. Liberal Democrats lost at the hands of illiberality. The Maoist movement wanted to dismantle everything 'old' - institutions, ideologies, personas, and

perceptions. In a process, they compromised with everything existing. The Maoists have been either dismantling or compromising till date.

They dismantled everything that was not been created by them and compromised with everything to achieve communism. 'Communism is our real target'- thundered Chandra Prakash Gajurel, central Maoist leader in my television talk-show program.

After election, the Maoists had an opportunity to lead a coalition government. In the last 30 years, Nepal has seen many governments, systems and leaders. Since 1991 alone there have been 12 governments. What have not been witnessed is prosperity and welfare. In Nepal, economic well-being and achievements have remained incompatible to that of political achievements.

In political front, Nepal has witnessed six minor and major revolutions- rare events in the history of any nation. Our generations alone have seen three different kinds of political system- Party-less Panchayat, Multi-party Democracy with constitutional Monarchy and Democratic Republic with no monarchy. There has been a dramatic increase in people's participation in the state of country's affairs due to changes brought by these political movements.

The domain of politics that remained largely confined among few interrelated families is now opened-up for others as compared to the past. Ordinary people from different walks of life, religion, ethnicity, class, caste, gender have participated in the state of affairs.

Consider this- 1967 National Panchayat had hill brahmins occupying 24%, Chhetris 37%, Newars 12%, Low caste hill people 0.8%, Hill tribals 15.2%, Hindus and Muslims from the plains 8.8%, Plain tribals 1.6%, hill people subtotaling 89.6% and Plains people only 10.4%. The constituent assembly today is composed of almost all existing ethnic and caste groups prevalent in Nepal.

However; despite socio-political and economic achievements, Nepal is in the brink of crisis. Nepal was in crisis when Blaike, Cameron and Seddon wrote 'Nepal in Crisis' in 1980. Nepal is still in crisis after 29 years. 'Exclusion' was real factor contributing to

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crisis during 1980. By 2008 we have state machineries with the highest degree of 'inclusion' as compared to the past-yet crisis is far from over.

On June 21st, 2008 police personals went on strike against their officers for the first time in the history of Nepal. In real sense it was a mutiny. Protest was against corruption and inhumane behaviors imposed by their seniors to them. Newspapers blamed Maoists for police rebellion.

Today security is in shambles and law is taken in hands. Business is fast eroding. Government staffs are punished publicly for corruption. Ex-Maoist minister, Mr. Matrika Yadav, locked Local District Officer in toilet in charges of corruption. Ordinary people in far west do not have food to eat. In cities there are no regular commodities. People in Terai are tortured by armed revolutionaries. Extortions, kidnappings and deaths have become a common phenomenon in new Nepal.

Nepalese State has lost its authority. Efficacy and Effectiveness of state seems to have eloped. Police force has already displayed mutiny. Political parties are vying for power. Ordinary people are restless due to price hike and insecurity. Life has no dignity in today's Nepal. Everyone overrule others right. Freedom is at stake and order is fast-eroding. All signs of failed state are clearly visible in our country.

Dr. Hari Bansha Dulal once observed- "We live in a country where the vice-president of the country flouts court order, home minister overlooks crimes and the prime minister, instead of firing the incompetent home minister, uses him as his emissary. Lawlessness starts from the top and trickles down to the common man. Criminals at the bottom of this food chain of lawlessness are taking every opportunity to take the law into their hands because that is the example leaders are leading with."

Development initiatives have remained cosmetic unlike our revolutions. Successive revolutions have failed to achieve what people have aspired for. Why people revolted? People revolted

expressing dissatisfaction with present. They revolted for the sake of liberty, dignity and prosperity. They revolted for better quality of life.

Unfortunately; freedom guaranteed by each successive revolution in Nepal has not been free. Each successive movement has only brought about the changes in political system. It could not bring any change in our character, attitude or mind-set. Moreover; the fruits of limited freedom have largely remained confined to few individuals of every caste, communities and ethnicities.

System of Panchayat only worked for Panches. Fruits of 1996 people's movement were largely confined to the cadres and leaders of Nepali Congress and the United Marxist Leninist. The Maoist movement was beneficial to Maoists, People Liberation Army and its Young Communist League. Madhesh movement was for the sake of Madhesis. Indigenous movement was only for indigenous people. Dalit movement was only for Dalits. And women movement only for women.

Every movement in our country is not all-encompassing. Movement that fails to cater to the needs of entire population is bound to be a failure. It is bound to create a movement against a movement. It is bound to create a vicious cycle of movements. And what I have seen in my country for the last 32 yrs is the vicious cycle of unfinished movements- one after another, one against another.

I have constantly failed to understand- Why various class, caste, ethnicity and gender have not been given due respect? Why is that we believe that self-thriving is only possible through the subjugation of others? Why some communities have to keep carrying movements? Why is power so attractive and seductive? What cost should one spent to achieve it? Why cannot we recognize that we have diversity? Why cannot our differences and diversities respected? Why is our diversity not our strength?

Discrimination in any form and of any kind has no place in today's world. Many practice discrimination to retain in power. Human conscious has matured enough and have already rejected idea of human discrimination long time back. What I have learned in 32 years of my life is 'the best of living is to coexist and cooperate'.

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For me, sources of these values have been a modern world. In our Hippocratic world, there are indeed greater life values that keep challenging human deficiencies.

Undoubtedly; modern politics crave for power. United Kingdom joined hands with the United States to wage war against Iraq. Then I was a student at the London School of Economics, pursuing my Masters program. I must share some of my experiences that have changed my world-views. Some of them are bad and some are exceptionally good.

Once I traveled to Plymouth, South west from London along with few of my friends. I stayed there for almost two months. As my pounds and pennies started emptying, I looked for a part-time job. I did not find any. Since Plymouth is a small town, there were fewer jobs. So I went to work with a food factory where I had to continue working eight hours a shift.

I never had done the manual labor to that extent ever before in my life. Having bent my back again and again while pouring food in the packaging machine, I soon picked-up a backache. I could therefore no longer continue my work.

After food, I started working in a pork factory. My job there was to clean the floor through the use of water pipe; therefore I did not have to bend my back. I continued my work for some time. One day I went to a Pub in Plymouth along with my friends.

As I went inside a bar to order drinks, one English man came to me, hold my hand and told on my face-” These fucking ‘Pakis’ are to be seen everywhere.” This man understood me as a Pakistani and expressed his anger against me. When I asked him to apologize for what he said; he simply left the bar.

It quickly came to my mind that racism has not ended in the United Kingdom. It dawned to me that the frustration, anger and anguish that young men and women from the Islamic world harbors towards the developed countries has not been borne in one night. People from other races have constantly undergone through such disrespect for a long time.

Osama Bin Laden in fact, is a by-product of certain belief

systems that believed in 'supremacy of one against the other, suppression of one against the other, and disrespect of one against the other.' I was wondering; was this ethos of the Magna Carta that English held high so proudly? Was this the values of democracy that English claim to have invented and propagated throughout the globe? How can peace be established with such belief systems? With such experience at Plymouth, I soon became anti-English and anti-west.

Having spent two months in Plymouth I came back to London. In London my anti-English attitude started withering away. London is a cosmopolitan city and is a home to millions of people from different countries, faiths and practices. Even my own friends at LSE were from various countries representing their distinct faiths, beliefs systems and practices.

I have come to understand the beauty of dozen of cultures through my interaction with my friends at LSE. What I have learned out of these interactions is that we are inherently different- Asians, Europeans, Jews, Chinese, Blacks, Aryans, Mongolians, Hindu, Muslims, Christian and Buddhists, but we never had a 'feeling for difference'.

One event needs worth mentioning here. During a movement against King Gyanendra, Gagan asked me to travel to Europe to sensitize people of outside world about the state of affairs in Nepal. When I contacted my friends at LSE, they were all interested to help movement in their own capacities. My friends from India, Chile, Africa, Spain, US were concerned about the fate of Nepali people. I must say that 'concern for others' that was so enthusiastically displayed by my LSE friends should be the defining spirit of the 21st century world.

When England rallied behind the United States unleashing war at Iraq, thousands of Englishmen marched in London along with people from different nationalities. They chanted anti-Blair and anti-government slogans. The London School of Economics has always been a hot-bed of political activism and intellectual discourse. I was mesmerized to witness hot debates and interaction. That was indeed a concern of English men and women towards

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common Islamic people. Oh! What a feeling was that of one race toward others.

My admiration for English people that was hammered and smashed by one man at Plymouth was re-installed by thousands in London. Humanity and civilizations have probably only survived against their mightier enemies in the entire history of mankind because of the spirits of common men and women who have constantly felt for others. It is 'feeling for others' that can instill peace in a world. It is the genuine acceptance and respect towards the difference that can only crush hatred and violence.

As one of the representative, I have no hesitation claiming that modern generation craves for togetherness. It hates hatred. It ridicules division. A world history has been repeatedly read and re-read. What lesson does it have? Is there any use of theory or knowledge that provokes war among nations, races and classes in modern time?

'A woman is to man as the slave to the master, the manual to the mental worker, the barbarian to the Greek' - said Aristotle. Is it not true that this idea forwarded by Aristotle about slave and masters been rejected long time back? Mankind march towards better world has already questioned the legitimacy of discrimination, suppression, divisions and hatred. If that is not true; what has been the progress made by mankind thus far?

Our generation cannot harvest suppression and hatred in the name of race, color, caste, ethnicity, sex, language, religion and region. It is only the handful of extremists from various groups that brainwash young people and misuse them. These young people are those who are often deprived of quality life and are easily misguided through sentimental and emotional bargaining. They are often lured through power and capital as well.

In return these young people do not hesitate to offer their individual lives while executing what has been ordered to them. How can a handful of people decide to institutionalize violence, wars and civil strife when millions of commoners from different nationalities, race, class, color, and caste are dead against it?

Young men and women throughout the globe have a strong feeling for 'peace' and not for war. I have personally felt it. When I was pursuing my Bachelors in South India Chennai during 1999-2002, I met many young Indians who were desperate in life to come-up with social and political innovations in order to challenge human sufferings.

Few of my friends have a deep impact in my personal life. One of my friends Pradeep K was a man with bubbling energy who constantly displayed high positive spirit. He was dissatisfied with his context and was willing to challenge it from his own capacity. I will always remember him for helping me to develop empathy and a fighting spirit against all odds.

Ms. Purnima Ganapathy who worked as a sub-editor for Indian Express, taught me the spiritual path and trusted me with all her efforts. Bimal Arora, a friend from Mumbai whom I met at LSE taught me how to have 'concern for others'. I have realized that friends are not only part of our lives. They are close companions who guide us 'how to walk and where to walk'. I have to admit that I have many close friends around me who have helped me understand life in its wider perspectives.

Father Principal at Loyola College, Fr. Ignacimuttu will never slip my mind for the rest of my life. I always gauzed this thin tall man from distance. I have seen him prioritizing per seconds of his life and putting his entire efforts while working. Directly I never had a chance to converse with him, but I have always conversed with him indirectly. He has been talking to me all these years through his life and character.

I remember him thanking everyone ranging from gardeners to cooks to hostel maintainers to lecturers and students for making Loyola proud in college day speech. What an acknowledgement and respect towards each member of Loyola family. I believe he must have spent each moments of his life romancing with it, loving with what he did.

I do not know how he inspired other students at Loyola, but he

has inspired me with an understanding that 'life is meant to live and therefore live it with utmost sincerity'.

I wish my country had few Ignacimuttus. Nepal is indeed endowed with potentialities to create new. During all these years, I feel my country and its people have witnessed division, killings, extortions, abductions, looting, disrespect and inhumane treatment.

New generation wants to create new- entirely new. Not with violence or with corruption but with real innovation, respect, cooperation, co-existence, prosperity, freedom and well-being. For this, we need men and women like Fr. Ignacimuttu. Our country lacks individuals and character having capacity to guide and institutionalize our social and political institutions.

First elected Prime minister of Nepal, B.P once remarked- "I think if Nepal has a future, if Nepal has a destiny, if Nepal has to prosper, if Nepal is not to remain only as a museum piece tucked away in the folds of the Himalayas, then Nepal must first be united as a nation. That unity can only be achieved through development of democratic institutions in which the people have vested interest."

Though we lack democratic institutions as visualized by B.P, we are in the process of making a new constitution for us. Leading actors and political parties may have their own preferences, but a common Nepali dream for an inclusive, secular, democratic and prosperous country.

For this to happen it is important for political parties and the Maoists to walk the path of consensus. The Maoist advent to a democratic polity was, therefore a matter of great respite for common men and women of our country.

However; it did not take long for people to understand that the Maoists intentions was not to join the democratic polity, but to achieve their communism through the use of democratic tools and processes. In fact, true intentions of Maoists were just beginning to surface.

Chapter 2 Imprisoned Conscience

Three weeks prior to election of the constituent assembly, I have had an opportunity to interview the Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' for my television talk-show program. The interview was arranged at his house. We were on time. However; we had to seek permission from liberation army to enter Prachanda's house. I realized how insecure Prachanda is- A man claiming to be liberating the entire mass is himself a prisoner to his life. How can he free people?

I must admit that Prachanda has special qualities with him. I don't know what that is. But he instantly hypnotized me with his words and body language. He carries and displays some sort of aura which is very difficult to get away with.

As he walked out of his meeting room, he shouts at his cadres for failing to offer tea and snacks to us. 'Hello Sumit Jee, how have you been- he asked?' He spoke to me as if he has known me for centuries. Intensity is what he displays. I realized that Prachanda can answer any questions, but he cannot look straight into the eyes of those who question him. I wondered if he could even look into his own eyes!

'Ya I am good and how have your election campaign been- I asked?' 'You know I was almost killed during campaign' - he replied. 'Oh is it so! Who wanted to kill you, I asked?' The spontaneous answer was-'Reactionaries'. I asked again- 'but why'? He said- 'They want to stop change'.

Prachanda and his party have always tried equating them with 'change'. Change is a natural process. All philosophy regards 'change' as the only ultimate truth. Still word 'change' mesmerizes individual, community, region and nations. Wars are fought and peace campaigns initiated for change. Histories are made and remade because of change.

And in fact; histories are recorded facts of change taken place at different times. In Nepal Prachanda wanted to equate the status of him and his party with 'hope' and 'change'. Young Nepali population that was longing for generations for a substantial change in the quality of their lives soon bought Prachanda idea of negative 'change'.

With a beginning of the Maoist revolution, Prachanda popularity soared. He was looked upon as a 'blessed one' who has risked his life to bring change in the lives of commoners. The Maoist revolution captured the sentiments of the larger Nepali population that remained suppressed at the hands of the state and a ruling class.

Minor communities soon associated them with violent movement initiated and led by the Maoist. State restructuring, constituent assembly election, and republic were some of the agendas forwarded by them, which became the slogan of our time.

Under the leadership of Prachanda, the Maoists' became a largest party in the constituent assembly. Prachanda was looked upon as a leader having capacity and willingness to influence human affairs. Bertrand Russell in his book, *Authority and the Individual*, remarked: "A man who wishes to influence human affairs finds it difficult to be successful, except as a slave or a tyrant." Prachanda rise in power and his subsequent action and remarks clearly indicated that he was all set to be a next tyrant of a new Nepal.

No doubt, political agendas invented by the Maoists' were able to catch the sentiments of common Nepali people. The Maoist has been successful in bringing issues for reform at surface. However; they were successful not because of their strategy and

capacity alone, but because of the failure of state, democratic polity and a ruling class to deliver basic needs and much needed reform.

Throughout our history various ethnic communities and caste groups have been denied of socio-economic and political power sharing. Ill-treatment and denial of rights and privileges have been compounded to and manipulated in the form of armed rebellion, led by the Maoist.

Failure to share the power in the governance and state structure resulted to the deaths of thousands. Our inability to recognize and respect others' have led to institutionalize negative values within society. Our failure to look beyond our narrow self has made us inhumane.

Unfortunately; the Maoists' never tried enhancing their capacity or learn beyond their orthodox political doctrine. Rather they were more focused and successful in portraying negative sides of their stated 'enemy'. In the entire political battle, the Maoists' could capitalize not because of their strength, but because of the weaknesses of our system, structure, values and practices of ruling class.

The parliamentary parties and the palace had been largely responsible in empowering Maoists. Maoists clearly explained what and why they wanted out of their armed movement. Palace and the Parliamentary parties stood against the Maoist ideologically, but facilitated their empowerment practically. These power mongers boast them as learned men 'capable' of handling the state affairs. Situation of present day Nepal is a clear example that talks about the capabilities of our rulers.

Rulers who make grounds for repeated movements in history of nations are the most incapable, incompetents and ill-educated. Palace; the moderate and extreme left; and pseudo-democrats ruling Nepal since 1990 are largely responsible for present state of our country. Failures of these 'incapable' leaders to rise above their petty interest have created grounds for revolutions after revolutions in Nepal.

The Maoist targeted incompetent and Hippocratic culture groomed and institutionalized by Nepalese elite who represented our polity and society at different times. Majority of Nepalese elite of different institutions and sectors have remained the most irresponsible class. In spite of the opportunities and privileges in capital, education, status- they are very poor, ill-educated and enjoy no respect in today's Nepali society.

Nepalese elite possess certain cultural traits that are entrenched in our present society. These are cultures with dictatorial attitude, suppression and thriving at any cost. They live with narrowly defined modernization and love to relate themselves with anything western. They carry themselves with culture of lies, deceits and conspiracies. They thrive not due to their personal strength, but at the demise of others.

Except humiliating embarrassment, they do not have anything substantial to offer to Nepali society. 'Responsibility' displayed by English aristocracy transformed the fate of the United Kingdom, whereas 'irresponsibility' displayed by ours has largely made us what we are today.

Large population of Nepalese middle-class adopted the 'cultural norm' of those elites. Nepalese middle class has, therefore become wolves hungry for their personal growth. In the process, they have compromised with everything- morale, principles and life-philosophies. They are largely a class that believes achieving success by hook or by crook. Their attitudes have devastated the basic norms of life. They are the worst violators of all state mechanisms, norms, laws, rules and regulations, and are yet the demanders of perfect political system. What an irony!

How can political leaders show any inclination towards materializing the workable political system when the demanders had neither legitimacy nor morals to ask for the same? Nepalese middle class is mentally slave in amassing wealth no matter what route, what principles and what actions they might have to follow- extreme commercialization of their own soul.

Money has become a religion for them. Francis Bacon said: "Money is like muck, not good unless it be spread." What could be more devastating to the fate of a nation when class responsible for the emancipation of all is already a living dead? Majority of Nepalese middle class are the bulk of jealous who harbor disease of loving others' wealth, status, power and knowledge.

Bidur, an eminent scholar of the Hindu scripture Mahabharata once said: 'maintaining jealousy towards others wealth, beauty, happiness, family, fate; such disease is of highest magnitude and is incurable'. Nepalese middle class suffers from some of these incurable diseases.

Our middle class has a positive strength also. Twenty first century humanist values like democracy, human rights and rule of law are their religious mantras. Unfortunately; these ideals are only used to fight against authoritarian rule, but not to make it their 'way of life'. These philosophical values are used by middle class as a weapon to fight against all tyrants, except self.

Major revolutions in Nepal have always been espoused and led by middle class, which has been supported by other classes. But after any political changes, same middle-class has transformed them to democratic tyrants using intelligence to grab power and capital. In such a process, they extract all privileges for them and deprive the larger population out of it.

The Maoists' knew that wider acceptance to democracy, rule of law and human rights were stumbling stones in their way to communism. They had to crush it. Practice of democratic values have been unjust in Nepal but the values itself were powerful enough to replace Maoism with humanism, violence with peace, division with unity, and anarchy with development.

The Maoists' were afraid of the philosophical foundations of these values. Without weakening democracy, it was not possible for communists to strengthen communism in Nepal. Realizing this, the Maoists' started dismantling institutions and organizations that represented liberal values. On December 21, 2008 twelve Maoists

trade union members went inside Himal media news room and attacked editor and journalists working there. With an attack on media, one could sense the beginning of Stalinism in Nepal.

Similarly, the Kantipur publication and the APCA houses were also harassed. On December 23, 2008 I came back home in evening participating from the sit-in protest organized by the Nepalese Journalist Federation against the atrocities perpetrated by the Maoist trade union in various media houses.

The Maoists' were dismantling these democratic institutions, but by wearing democratic gowns. They were quick to label media houses as bourgeoisies' machineries. They even started demanding standard salary and quality life for their proletariat colleagues working within those media houses.

Everyone knew that the Maoists' were threatening any institutions that dared to stand against their ideology. However; they were doing so by exposing ill-treatments carried against workers that were rampant among Nepalese media houses.

Though for a year I have personally worked as a free-lance television journalist. I was a part-timer conducting a live talk-show once a week. My program was based on current socio-economic and political issues. I have worked both with the Nepal television (2) and Nepal 1 television. Nepal Television (2) is a state-run, whereas Nepal 1 is a private television channel.

It may not be rational to generalize all media houses on equal footing. But as far as I have to talk about media houses I have worked with, I have found them corrupt and inept. They thrive on manipulation and injustice upon their own workers and journalists. Workers and journalists are paid meager, that too, not in time.

At times monthly salaries remain pending for months. This compels many journalists to compromise with their ethos and receive bribe for their survival. In many occasions, Nepalese journalists have exchanged their journalistic ethos and morals with a bribe that is offered to them. One can still find the list of those journalists who were paid by the state during King's direct rule.

On the premise of doing right for the journalists and workers, the Maoists' were doing even more wrongs. The Maoist intention of targeting press was not for the welfare of workers or journalists, but was to curtail the ideas that free press espouses. Though severe weaknesses in them, Nepal's press world has always stood against all forms of despotism and social ills that have prevailed in Nepali society.

On January 11, 2009 a young women journalist from my hometown was killed by an unidentified group of people. Journalist Uma Singh had been writing vigorously and advocating against a dowry system, cruelest form of gender discrimination that is entrenched in Madhesi society.

She was equally vocal against Maoist atrocities. The Kathmandu Post reported- "Police on Sunday arrested a Unified CPN (Maoist) cadre Shrawan Yadav, from his house in Rampurbirta of the district on the charge of murdering Janakpur-based journalist Uma Singh." Yadav was Maoist regional committee member of Siraha-5. Along with Yadav, Uma's sister-in-law Lalita Singh and nephew Abhishek Singh were also arrested.

Uma will always be remembered as an ardent freedom fighter and a justice seeker. She ventured a career in journalism rather than submitting to fear and injustice. She defied social norms and taboos that Madhesi society attaches towards women working outside the boundaries of their own houses. She died at the age of 24. Until she lived, she did not compromise for what she believed in.

Young Nepalese freedom fighters from all backgrounds will always remember vigor, uncompromising zeal and enthusiasm for generations which she displayed till she lived. Sometimes I wonder how long our part of world keeps killing the truth seeker.

How long our women will be denied of their right to life for standing against any form of gender discrimination? I never had a chance to meet Uma, neither have I known her personally. But I felt quite aggrieved the day I heard about her death. I felt I lost something important within me. I could never found what that was!

Nepalese media has always been Maoist prime target and enemy. The Maoists wanted to capture the entire state power, which was not possible without dismantling and discrediting media. Prior to attacking Himal media, the Maoists' have killed many journalists during armed insurgency and even after joining the peace process. Birendra Sah, television reporter of the Avenues television was one such journalist who died at the hands of the Maoists'.

After media, the Maoists' targeted religion. Prachanda led government replaced the major South Indian priests serving the Pashupatinath temple. South Indian priests serving Pashupatinath was a historical trend dating back to centuries. Hindus believe worshiping Pashupatinath everyday without being hindered even for a single day.

If someone dies in a house, Nepalese neither worship nor indulge into any kind of celebration for thirteen days. Nepalese priests have not been assigned any work in the Pashupatinath for a fear that worship might be stopped if the assigned priests die. It is, therefore Indian who were serving Pashupatinath as chief priests, not Nepalese. Many Nepalese priests are also serving different temples in India.

Abruptly the Maoists' replaced two Indian priests with the Nepali ones. 'We have no intention of vacating Indian priests from their positions, but we only did that following their resignations' was the official response from the Maoists'. Such statement was but difficult to be believed. The Pashupatinath is a temple of lord Shiva and a centre of conviction for millions of Hindus around the globe. The Pashupatinath for Nepalese Hindus is what Vatican is for Christians, and Mecca to Muslims.

Protest erupted in the streets of Kathmandu against the Maoist decision of replacing South Indian priests with the Nepali ones. Its ramification could even be witnessed among the Hindus in India. Bharitiya Janata Party, opposition party in the Indian Lok Sabha came heavily against the Maoists' decision.

They even criticized Congress (I) led government for doing

nothing against such acts. The Maoists' on the other hand were adamant about their decision. Prachanda in his statement declared- 'We have no intention of hurting Hindus'.

His statement could convince no one. At least it could not convince me. For me this was an act against humanity. The Maoists' were trying hard to win the hearts and minds of Nepalese trying to portray themselves as nationalists. They fired the South Indian priests to prove the same. Anyone disagreeing with their ideas, ideology and actions were termed anti-national by them. For me it was not a nationalist act. It was Prachanda's attempt of unleashing a 'cultural revolution' in Nepal.

Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala (BP) once stated: "Nationalism means that the whole people must be motivated. The whole nation must be motivated. I am for building institutions in which the people have vital interests. If you don't take care of people as such, you have no right to talk of nationalism. Because the nation is not earth, the nation is the people. One does not promote national cohesion or help build a nation by depriving the people of the political and constitutional rights. Chauvinistic slogans as a garb for totalitarianism do not constitute nationalism. Being anti-India is not promoting nationalism."

He further said-"No state today is an isolated nation that exists in a vacuum. The conception of a sovereign state, as defined by political thinkers of 18th century Europe, is inapplicable to modern times. If anybody thinks in terms of those thinkers now, he is out of date by two centuries. The notion of nation state had been an ideal during a specific historical period but it had never been practically realized in the ideal form in history. Not even in that specific period."

Hundreds and thousands of Nepalese have migrated to Europe, America, India and the Middle East in search of a job and better life. How will the Maoists' respond when the governments from different countries sends back Nepalese to their homeland citing nationalism and race? Will that be a humanist approach in the present globalized world? Would such irrational act serve the interest of our country?

The South African government prohibited Indian from entering and settling in South Africa through the 1913 Immigration Regulation Act. In its door it was written-” this place is only reserved for people with white color. In this sacred land Indians, no matter how intellectual or rich he is- cannot enter.”

In the beginning of the 20th century, General Smutts initiated ‘White Race Supremacy Religion’ deploring people of other race and religion. What General Smutts did in the beginning of the 20th century in South Africa, communist leader, ‘Prachanda’ repeated same on the 21st century Nepal. The Maoist actions were not nationalistic, but were designed to promote hatred among people of two different countries that have remained close for centuries. It was indeed a deplorable action.

As a Prime minister, Prachanda took his first official oath in the name of people not in the name of God. Unfortunately; he intervened in the religious jurisdiction like a God himself. Nepal is now a secular country. How can a Prime minister or a government of a secular country intervene in religious faith and practices of certain believers? I do not understand.

On the other side, priests and Bhandaris (Nepali priests that assisted the chief Indian priest) serving the Pashupatinath for centuries were not accountable either to the government or to the people. The Pashupatinath is a temple that receives donation in millions. There has never been any system and mechanism to bring those donations to public knowledge.

How are these funds used? What are they utilized for? Priests and Bhandaris rather than serving the interest of people and government were serving their personal lives with donations. What they practice can easily be termed as religious corruption. What an ugly and perverted practice in the name of religion!

In Nepal Hindu religion has played a dominant role in shaping the values, belief and attitudes of our society. Religion has an intrinsic relationship with economy, politics and social practices. Role performed by an elderly male in traditional Nepali family was

no different from the role played by a Hindu monarch in our country.

The orthodox Hindus propagated - 'Hindu king is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. And therefore he can do no wrong to his people.' At the hand of such religious belief, Nepalese became 'subjects' to kings for centuries. The orthodox Hindus and priests propagated- 'Husband is a god to his wife.' Nepalese women are suffering gender discrimination of cruelest form due to such religious faith. Hindu religion has divided society in various castes and sub-castes groups.

The *Muluki Ain*, a legal code promulgated by Nepali state in 1854 talks about functions of different castes and sub-castes group. Brahmins and priests were at the top of hierarchy. A Brahmin worships and recites mantras. Due to this profession, some of these priests amassed huge wealth either in the form of land, cash or kind.

They became economically powerful through the exchange of their Brahminic services. As they developed close connection with elites and rulers while delivering their services, there was a tremendous rise in their political power also. Socially, Brahmins were thought of no wrong doers.

The legal code made other caste groups respect Brahmins no matter what crimes they commit. If other caste groups were penalized with death sentence for breaching the legal code, Brahmins were merely asked to leave the country by shaving their head off and making them carry a pig at their back for the same crime. At the most, they were put behind the bars.

Lethargic attitude was institutionalized instead of hard work. Few Brahmins amassed huge wealth by worshiping and reciting mantras and doing nothing for the rest of the day. Nepali society learned from these priests - 'Hard work has no relevance'. Incompetence was borne out of lethargy. Incompetence led to the institutionalization of corruption.

For a competent man, corruption means death. Corruption has become a Nepali life value which has its root in Hinduism, its

culture and practices. However; this does not imply that only Hindus are corrupt or only Hindu practices have helped institutionalize corruption. Had only Hindus been culprit- how is it possible for the same Hindus to thrive in any political system outside Nepal? Had it been only a Hindu influence in other caste groups, how is it possible for other caste groups to thrive in any political system outside Nepal?

Since Hindus have largely occupied social, political, economic and cultural leadership, major share for institutionalization of corruption falls upon them. And in Nepal, corruption flows from top to bottom both vertically and horizontally no matter whether the leaders are Hindus or non-Hindus, Brahmins or Janjatis, Madhesis or Pahadis.

Bhagvat Gita says:

Yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas
tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute
lokaś tad anuvartate **(Karma Yoga ||21||)**

This means: Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues. Looking at the present state of Nepal and the plight of Nepalese, one can easily imagine the actions and standards set by our social, political, cultural and economic leaders and elites.

Hinduism is a hierarchical religion dividing masses, dividing duties of the masses, fostering division by classifying people as superior and inferior through the use of caste system. Hinduism has divided individual life in four parts- Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanprastha and Sanyash. Unfortunately; Hindus failed to realize that life does not follow any sequence and order. Life breaks all orders and move ahead.

Untouchability as a social practice has been promoted and institutionalized by orthodox Hindus. It is not Vedas or a God, but the practices of orthodox Hindus that has suppressed and divided society. Hierarchies espoused by Hindus have been both accepted

and revolted against at different occasions. Accepted because that was only the means for climbing a social ladder and rejected because that coerced individual choices.

What is the use of a religion that propagates hatred and division among its own citizens? What is the use of a religion that can only thrive on suppression of one caste group or one gender? What is the use of a religion that hinders change and progress in the name of fatalism? What is the use of a religion that has no progressive agenda to guide society towards humanism? What is the use of a religion that serves no moral values and philosophy to society? Either reform or wither it away.

Eminent scholar Prayag Raj Sharma said: "The Hinduism of Nepal today does not serve to support any moral values; it merely serves to give Nepal a unique identity- the identity of the only Hindu Kingdom in the world. It endorses the return to the patrimonial model in politics once more, although an end to it was announced earlier. It also serves to retain the residual forms of feudalism where all coveted jobs are treated as old jagirs to be distributed as favors by several layers of patrons and sub-patrons that ultimately connect up to the power centre. In the name of tradition, Hinduism conveniently provides a welding force to this political culture."

An entrance in the Pashupatinath temple reads-'Only Hindus are allowed'. Is it not discriminatory? Is it not the violation of individual rights guaranteed by the constitution of a country that has endowed every Nepalese individual with a right to travel in the public realm? Is this humanistic? Can such practices fosters understandings and brotherhood or create further wall of divide and mistrust? In Nepal; one often reads in Newspaper about Dalits who are denied entering temples. What kind of feelings would Dalits have towards Hindus when such entrances are prohibited?

When Dalits get married with high caste non-Dalits, it creates hue and cry. Such couples are denied an entry in a village. Can such a worthless practice control the aspirations of the young population that want to venture together irrespective of their castes and

religions? Such young ones should rather be respected because they are helping demolish a wall of hatred, mistrust, injustice that were solidly created by religion and were practiced for centuries.

I am a Hindu. My religion is, but within me. It cannot be guided by few mullahs and priests. Their orthodoxies cannot be my way of life. In spite of being a Hindu, I have a luxury of visiting churches and Mosques. I visited the historical churches in England and India. I visited a mosque in my hometown, Janakpur.

I have learnt a historicity attached with those monumental buildings. The art crafts, the grandeurs and the serenity of these monuments should be preserved for future generations so that religion could be understood in its totality. I am dismayed, why cannot any Christians or Muslims enter inside the Pashupatinath? Such attitude is a disease that has been invented by the priests and Hindu fanatics in the name of superiority of religion.

Amassing huge wealth by priests and Bhandaris of the Pashupatinath is therefore a heinous crime in the name of religion. No one should have a luxury to make money without working hard for it. It is only labor, hard work and ethical values that should determine one's earning and dignity. Wealth received by Pashupatinath as donation must be within government's preview. Pashupatinath is Nepal's cultural heritage. And anything derive from Pashupatinath automatically becomes national wealth.

The Maoists' attack on democratic institutions was going unabated. An attempt was made by the Maoists' to discredit and delegitimize the civil society. After all, Ernest Gellner has opined, 'the central intuition of Marxism is to say: Civil society is a fraud'. Civil society has been understood in many ways in Nepal. Large portion of Nepalese population understood civil society in the form of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in post-1990 era.

Thousands of NGOs proliferated after 1990. Their activities ranged from advocacy to infrastructure development and from risk management to human rights monitoring. NGOs contributed to Nepal's development in a positive way through micro-finance and

infrastructure development. They worked to sensitize people about their rights.

On the negative side, NGOs were largely regarded as an institutions involved in the production of dollars. Their involvements in corruption and mismanagement have been reported many times in Nepali media. There are individuals and organizations that have discredited the entire civil society organizations in Nepal.

The role played by civil society organizations during the April uprising was however constructive. Nepalese civil society was at forefront against the King's direct rule. It championed the cause of democracy, human rights and rule of law. Political parties were discredited and did not enjoy the larger public support during the initial days of the movement. It was largely the civil society that galvanized anti-king movement initially.

Ordinary people from different walks of life- poets, literary figures, human rights activists, doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, students, journalists were involved in the April uprising. An understanding about civil society only as an 'NGO' was soon transformed to 'a platform or a space that is concerned with national agendas'. Krishna Pahadi, Devendra Raj Pandey and Khagendra Sangraula were some of the prominent figures of civil society movement.

Civil society played a constructive role in bridging gaps between the parliamentary political forces and the Maoist. 'Republic' was the Maoist agenda. 'Democracy' was an agenda of the parliamentary political forces. During the movement, civil society fashioned the agendas forwarded both by the Maoist and democratic political parties. They fused it and adopted 'Democratic Republic' as their agenda. And they fought tirelessly unless that was achieved. Reputation and legitimacy of civil society grew leaps and bounds.

Legitimacy acquired by civil society was the greatest threat for the Maoist in their process towards capturing the state power. As a

public sphere, Nepalese civil society has always displayed their unflinching commitment towards democracy. The Maoist therefore, wanted to dismantle the legitimacy of civil society organizations in order to delegitimize the ideals they carried along with them. In a process, the Maoist labeled civil society as groups of organizations engrossed in corruption, mismanagement and in amassing dollars in the name of development.

The Maoist simultaneously attacked the legitimacy of judiciary, bureaucracy and Nepal Army. If one closely looks- the Maoists' were strategically targeting deficiencies and negative sides exhibited by sectors, systems and classes, but only to restore their brutality, atrocities and despotism. Nepalese judiciary and bureaucracy are notoriously popular for their corrupt and inept character. Ex-Chief Justice, Min Bahadur Raimajhi openly accepted the prevalence of entrenched corruption in judicial system and promised to reform it.

On the other hand, government officials have been caught red-handed while receiving bribe from their clients in many occasions. Inefficiency, corruption and nepotism are few elements that characterize Nepal's judicial system and bureaucracy.

Nepali army lacks national character. Army has always been led by few interrelated families until recently. Nepali Army has been characterized as a brutal force throughout the history. Its stories are replete with the murders of innocent and democratic activists. Since the monarchs remained the commander in chief of army unless Republic was proclaimed, the institution had its commitment towards the King.

However; one can sense a transformation within an army as Nepal proclaimed herself Republic. During the process, Nepali Army did not intervene in safeguarding the ex-king's position. It was felt that army was slowly adopting itself to the changing time and context.

Under such circumstances, the Maoist led government decided to thwart the chief of army Rookmangud Katwal- price of

which was paid with the downfall of the Maoist government. All political parties in coalition government were against the Maoist unilateral move.

Entire country got polarized in the issue of Chief of army. The president, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav challenged the government's decision on the pretext of request made by twenty two political parties of constituent assembly. Coalition political partners resigned from the government. Prachanda had to resign and let go his prime ministerial position. On May 26, 2009 Madhav Kumar Nepal replaced Prachanda as a prime minister.

Reacting sharply against the Maoist's unilateral decision, I wrote on the Kathmandu Post-

"Nepal's peace process has received a heavy jolt due to the Maoist singular decision to remove the Chief of Army Staff Rookmangud Katawal and the president's decision to reinstate him. Why were the Maoists' hell-bent on meddling with the institution of army? Was it because the institution was defying the government's order? Or was it because the unified Maoists' internal strife was posing a threat to Prachanda hold on party that he has led for the last 17 years without conducting any general conventions?

Was it necessary for the Maoists' to get involved in this issue when all political parties were moving ahead in drafting the constitution? What would have happened had the time been seriously spent on writing the constitution instead of meddling with the institution and subsequently injecting reform by remaining within a democratic framework?

The Maoists' have failed to convince Nepali masses why it meddled with army at this juncture of peace process when understanding and cooperation between stakeholders was vital for army integration and drafting the constitution? Shouldn't the Maoist-led government take army into confidence to initiate army integration process and empower the peace process or should it provoke the army by unnecessary meddling at this point in the peace process?

The Maoists' have given few reasons for meddling with the army. First, it claims that army challenged the supremacy of civilian authority through the recruitment process. The Maoist government had ordered army not to take in new personnel. Reacting to Maoist order, army moved the Supreme Court challenging government's decision. The Supreme Court issued a stay order and asked army to suspend its recruitment drive.

How could the Maoists' uphold the supremacy of civilian rule by sacking the army chief on the pretext of recruitment when the Supreme Court had justified army move and at the same time had asked it not to recruit anyone further? By asking questions on the same pretext, are Maoists not posing a threat to the supremacy of the court? Didn't Maoists cadres shout anti-court slogans during the time of decision? Is that constitutional? Is that action synonymous with upholding the supremacy of democratic governance?

Can Maoists sack the chief of army alone when its partners in the coalition, opposition and the president had advised it not to do so? Wasn't that move unconstitutional when the Interim Constitution of Nepal has directed all political stakeholders to walk the path of cooperation until the new constitution is written?

Can Maoists justify its commitment to peace and constitution writing process when it knows that walking together by agreeing with each other is the need for the same? During their nine months in government, Maoists have walked through a series of actions that are unconstitutional and against the constitution writing and peace process. But today, it portrays itself as the only party that glorifies the values of "civilian supremacy". What a paradox!

The president has indeed walked down an unconstitutional route by going against the decision of the civilian government, but has it not taken place only after Maoists' unconstitutional move? The president must remain within the boundaries of the constitution, but wouldn't that apply to Maoists too?

When the case of the president is at the Supreme Court, on what legitimate and constitutional grounds are Maoists on the

streets and in parliament demanding correction of the president's move? Is it not unconstitutional to pressure the court's decision? The president indeed needs to be corrected, but shouldn't Maoists apologize and correct their decision that compelled the president to take such action?

And with the recent release of the video tape in which Prachanda speaks of completely seizing the state; many are convinced that the president through his move has checked Maoists' undemocratic intentions. The Maoists' and Prachanda have not only lied to national and international stakeholders, they have also cheated those voters who saw a possibility of change through them. In a released video, Prachanda states that election of the Constituent Assembly was only a strategy capturing the state power. He admits that Maoists had only 7,000 to 8,000 combatants.

Prachanda asked his party cadres to promote the need of the Constituent Assembly not for state restructuring or the new constitution, but to seize the entire state. And he asks his cadres, "Didn't Lenin propagate the slogan of land, peace and bread to capture the state? We should propagate Constituent Assembly in the same fashion." What a shame!

Prachanda has lied to the people of Nepal. Today, it's a proven fact that the Maoists' have only tactically committed themselves to the Constituent Assembly, peace and democracy, but not genuinely. Shouldn't Maoists prove their genuine commitment towards democracy, peace and the constitution writing process before terming the president's move unconstitutional?

The Maoists' are claiming that the speech is not relevant in today's context as it was given in 2007 during the time of election of the Constituent Assembly. If the Maoist intentions should not be judged by what they said and did since 2007, why should the Congress, UML and other political parties be judged by what they did since 1990?

If the Maoist intentions should not be judged for adamantly throwing away the army chief, why should the president's move be

termed suspicious? No doubt, everyone must remain within the boundaries of constitution — the president, the Maoists and the army.

There can be no debate on whether army should follow the supremacy of civilian rule or not. Neither can one run away from the fact that we all — political parties, army, president, civil society and people in general — have an important role to play for the success of the peace process. But for that everyone should genuinely commit themselves to the peace process.

And today it is the Maoists' whose commitment is doubtful; therefore, it is they who need to prove their sincerity, not the president. It is the Maoists' who need to apologize with the common people for cheating them during the election.

It is the Maoists' who should apologize with the families of disappeared and victims of the war for using them as means to win election. It is the Maoists' who should review their unilateral decision to sack the chief of army. And the president will automatically fall within the parameters of the constitution.

We are at a national crisis, fuelled and initiated by the Maoists'. And it is they who need to correct it; the president will be automatically corrected. Time demands that Maoists prove their commitment not through words, but only through actions. And the "jihad" it has unleashed in various districts against Congress and UML cadres seems to be local policy as the central leaders are claiming that the party has no such policy! Maoists must prove their commitment to resolve the present national crisis."

In spite of these strong worded reactions against the Maoist, I was also contemplating: Was I trying to empower the extreme right by criticizing the extreme left? But what options were left to those who wanted to curtail both the extremes? Both the extremes are unhealthy for Nepal. I am not in favor of either of these extremes.

It was only until the recent past when the extreme right wing was powerful in Nepal. I am shocked to see the transformation that took place within the short span where the extreme left got

empowered and the extreme right swept away. Today extreme right is in the process of remaking itself. The Maoist unilateral decision to sack the chief of army helped extreme right galvanize their strength.

Ordinary people like me were merely a pawn in the larger political spectrum whose conscious was trapped between both the extremes. What jolted me was but the sharp polarization that materialized after a removal of the chief of army. Polarization was not at all healthy for country, particularly at the juncture of unfinished peace process.

Those ordinary people who were polarized in two different camps had their own beliefs and perspectives. It is not common supporters on either sides of the fence who were to be blamed, both were partially correct. Polarization was beneficial for the leaders of both camps, not for the country. To my dismay, the center had nothing to offer. No one knew what new could center offer on such polarization.

Since long center has failed to draft the workable ideology and path for Nepal. For the past two decades, they either swing to extreme left against extreme right, and at times to extreme right against the extreme left. Center lacked the political perspective to guide country from national impasse. It lacked solid position. It was not eager for newness. It was living within its own rigid attitude and structure. For center, an innovation was merely a rebellion.

However, the need of hour was to strengthen the center that could bring the two extremes into negotiation. Peace process was vital for all Nepalese. And negotiation between various stakeholders was equally important for the success of peace process. But how could have the negotiation taken place between an unequal partners? It was the turn of extreme right to swell up in power and influence and leave the extreme left underneath.

Nepali center was trapped in between, not been able to offer anything innovative to strengthen the peace process. Center has always suffered at the hands of both the extremes in Nepalese political history. Yet it has been trying to bring the conflicting parties

into negotiation. Undoubtedly, both the extremes always had a common agenda- 'weaken the center'.

Theoretically both the Maoist and extreme right have always kept repeating their commitment towards democracy and the rule of law. Practically, they have always believed in ignoring them. One can find a strange and similar characteristic between the extreme right and left in Nepal.

The Maoists' have always believed in smashing system. Maoism cannot be established without smashing established institutions and personas. King Prithivi Narayan's reputation as a founding father has therefore been smashed. An attempt has therefore been made to smash media, civil society, judiciary, bureaucracy and Nepali army. History is an enemy to communists. Historical materialism is an important component of communism. Yet smashing history becomes a glorifying act for communists. What a paradox!

Communism and communists thrive on paradoxes and confusions. Communism is therefore a confused ideology used in order to confuse mass, only to rule over commoners' conscience. The Maoists' attack on institutions was not noble. In the name of reform, they wanted to dismantle bits and pieces of democratic ideas and ideals that these sectors, systems and classes have exhibited in spite of their deficiencies.

During the ten years of armed movement and even at the aftermath of the peace process, the Maoist killed thousands of innocent people often brutally. In the name of movement, commoners were hanged, butchered and cuts into pieces. Violence became the norm of the day, and it still is.

On Dec 5, 2008 a daily English Newspaper, The Himalayan Times reported an arrest of seventeen years old Rajendra Pundit on the charges of killing his two mates of the same age. Rajendra killed his friend for failing to repay money that was exchanged for a mobile-set. The Maoist violent movement coupled to that of lack of economic opportunities has given birth to thousands of Rajendra in

Nepal. One can easily imagine the scope and impact that violence perpetuates in a society.

Unlike orthodox Hindus, the Maoists' have taught society not to labor to reap the fruit. It handed over weapons at the hands of young population and taught them to survive on extortions and kidnappings in order to make their living. Thousands of extortions and kidnapping cases that one finds rampant in 'New Nepal' can easily be credited to the Maoists'.

The Maoists' have not only killed the population physically, but have handicapped the progressive psych of a nation by making young population involve in destruction and violent activities. Thomas Merton once said: 'Peace demands the most heroic labor and the most difficult sacrifice. It demands greater heroism than war. It demands greater fidelity to the truth and a much more perfect purity of conscience'. Unfortunately; the Maoists' were not heroes and they did not practice what they preached.

As the sweeping changes are taking place at the global level, it is comparatively easy to challenge the status-quo. Status-quo can be altered. It can be questioned, reformed and changed. But the criminalization cripples the capacity of a progressive society. It hinders and kills the innovation for change. The Maoists' were asking support from other socio-economic and political stakeholders in a country when they were ruling with the help of violence and institutionalization of criminalization.

How can the Maoists' expect support from Nepali society in such a situation? Weren't Maoist's seeking support from political parties to allow their cadres to keep continuing seizing land, properties and community forests? Weren't they seeking support to let their cadres run rampant upon the lives of those who dare to disagree with them? Or weren't they expecting a support to back-up the idea of totalitarian system and governance in the name of 'poor' and 'people's' democracy?

How can the Maoist expect support from Nepali Congress when they label it as its 'core enemy'? How can they expect support

from the United Marxist Leninist when they label it 'opportunist'? How can they expect support from Madhesi political parties when they label them 'foreign stooges'?

How can they expect support from civil society organizations when they keep hitting hard the 'civility' of society through coercion, extortions, abductions, threats and killings? How can they expect to receive support from media when they cannot tolerate the information that is not in their favor? How can they expect support from academicians, writers and analysts when they cannot tolerate the difference of opinion?

Double standard has been a hallmark of the Maoist party. On July, 2005 Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, top brass Maoist leader in an interview said- "Some of the key components of the bourgeois form of democracy, namely multiparty competition, periodic elections, universal franchise, rule of law, freedom of the press and speech, etc., however, seem to enjoy wider validity. We have, therefore, sought to incorporate these characteristics in the future democratic setup in the country. As for the particular question of a multiparty system, we have time and again reiterated our commitment to it and incorporated it in our official resolutions adopted by the Central Committee. You can particularly find this in the well-known resolution 'On the Development of Democracy in the 21st Century' adopted in June 2003."

After four years in October 2009 Dr. Baburam Bhattarai completely opined differently. In an interview with World People's Resistance Movement, he claimed- "the petty bourgeoisie class and other classes needed to be mobilized if we were to complete the stage of strategic offensive and capture the state in a revolutionary manner. After 2005 we decided to shift our activity to the urban areas, because without mobilizing the masses in urban areas we couldn't complete our strategic offensive, capturing the state. With these tactics in mind we entered into the negotiation process with certain parliamentary parties."

Similarly on August 23, 2008 Maoist leader Netra Bikram

Chand aka Biplav remarked: "We had fought for peoples' democracy and nationalism. Unless Nepal is declared a Communist Republic there will be no peace. The fight for a Communist state and nationalism continues. The failure of Communism worldwide does not and should not mean that Communists in Nepal will meet the same fate. We nevertheless must remain on high-alert to foil the conspiracies being hatched within the country and outside. We need to change the mindset of Nepali bureaucracy, industrialists and international partners that total reform was indeed possible only in a total Communist republic. And if our proposals are not accepted by anyone as such, we will not remain quiet. We will anyhow put them into practice."

How can the Maoist expect support from various stakeholders when the party and leaders keep making confusing and double standard remarks? How best the Maoists' be judged on the light of statements made by its top brass leaders?

On October 27, 2008 the Maoist-led government withdrew all political cases recorded during the conflict period beginning from Feb 13, 1996 to November 21, 2006. In the name of amnesty; criminals, killers and gang-rapists were released. The Maoist freed Jadopal Paswan, Pramod Baitha Dhobi and Ramnath Sah- three awaiting the court verdict on the charges against raping a 14 year old girl, Domi Rai Yadav.

How best should the Maoist be judged on the pretext of such actions? What would be the fate of those nations where government is itself involved to institutionalize the criminalization? How should the national and international community judge a party and government that institutionalized violence, corruption, nepotism and criminalization in the pretext of defeating the status-quo elements? Would there be any difference between Robert Mugabe and Prachanda or Hitler and Prachanda for that matter?

Hitler wanted to create a Superman, a new Man belonging to his own race. The Maoist wanted only their race in Nepal, but no one else. Hitler raised the consciousness of German people to

achieve his prescribed 'Utopia'. Prachanda and Maoists did the same.

The Maoist raised the sub-conscious mind of the suppressed. The Maoists' made an individual stand to safeguard their rights. In the process they imprisoned individuals and community conscience. Unlike Hitler's liberation; the Maoists' liberation movement was aimed to imprison the conscience of the entire state.

The Maoists' claimed to liberate the under-privileged class, but only to imprison them with their Maoism. The Maoists' wanted to thrash the opportunistic state structure, but only by establishing their despotic communist structure. The Maoists' wanted to dispense justice, but only through their atrocities. The Maoists' wanted a lasting peace, but only through institutionalizing violence.

The Maoists' wanted to emancipate all, but only through subjugating and destroying media, judiciary, rule of law, human rights, class, religion, and others who are considered "enemies of the state" by them. Anyone disagreeing with their point of view was considered either 'reactionaries' or 'enemies of the state'.

The Nepalese Maoists' have indeed developed a narrow and perverted notion of human emancipation. And we have many national and foreign academicians, activists, intellectuals and international development agencies openly supporting such a narrow version of human emancipation. The Maoists' did raise the issue of complete freedom, but only with a wrong approach.

Are socio-economic, political and cultural transformations of any nation really worth at the cost of war, brutality and violence? What kind of social psychic would such war, violence and brutality instill in society? Mahatma Gandhi denied independence of India through the violent means. He was more concerned about the impact of violence in society as compared to that of independence. For him right means are necessary for right ends.

Those who are concerned only about the end and not means opine that Indian independence would not have materialized had Subhas Chandra Boss and Bhagat Singh not played their part. They

are true to say so. Through their attempt, Subhas Chandra Boss and Bhagat Singh did help India gain freedom from the clutches of British Raj.

However; Gandhijee attempts not only liberated India, but human conscience and the entire humanity. Gandhijee became a leader of the world, whereas Boss and Singh were confined to India. And that is a notable difference. Can a violent means guarantee a peaceful freedom? Violent means may achieve freedom which may not be necessarily peaceful.

Voltaire once said: "War is the greatest of all crimes; and yet there is no aggressor who does not color his crime with the pretext of justice." He further said- "It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound trumpets."

During signing of Peace Accord, the Maoist committed to renounce violence and return the seized land and property which have not been done even after the formation of their own government. The Maoist committed to disband all functions of its paramilitary youth force, the Young Communist League (YCL). In spite of suspending, it changed the Young Communist League to the Young Communist Democratic League, as if change in name would have a change in character.

Immanuel Kant said-"No Treaty of Peace Shall Be Held Valid in Which There Is Tacitly Reserved Matter for a Future War". Peace accord that took place between the Maoist and the government of Nepal was necessary, but not valid. By signing 'peace accord' in 2006 the Maoists' had only entered the truce awaiting full-fledged war against its entire enemy.

Nepal's Maoists kept proliferating contradictory, double standards and inconsistent statements. However, they were not inconsistent towards their end. They were focused in achieving their communist state. For that they had to be perceived as inconsistent so that they can confuse and weaken all those forces that would have otherwise countered them collectively. Inconsistency,

contradictions and double standards cannot be defined as 'Nepalese Maoism', but rigidity, brutality and dictatorship of the proletariat is what Nepalese Maoism is synonymous to.

At one end, the Maoists atrocities were on rise. And at the other, liberal and socialist democrats were not willing to reform and change themselves as per people's aspirations. Defects, lifelessness, violence, greed, corruption could be witnessed on both sides.

Under such pretext- President of the Nepali Congress Girija Prasad Koirala stressed the need for a democratic alliance against the failure and violent aggression of radical communists, whereas the Maoist central working committee stressed a need for an alliance between republican and nationalist forces for effective implementation of the government's plans and policies and for the removal of the status quo mindset prevalent in Nepali society.

Failure of democrats and communists had led to the proposal for two alliances. What was more urgent was the emergence of a third alliance — a citizens' alliance. Values enshrined in democratic theory have always been applauded by Nepali people.

Human rights, the rule of law, equal opportunities and dignity are some of the goals that Nepalese people will always keep striving for. Nevertheless; due to the neglect of socialist practices within democracy, a large chunk of population was left out from the mainstream of development. As a result, the validity of democracy shrank in size and scope in Nepal.

World history is replete with examples of kings and rulers who refused to pass power to their incompetent heirs in the larger interests of nation. Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius offers a caretaking responsibility of the entire Roman Empire to his general, Maximus. King Marcus believed that his son Commodus was not a moral man who could rule Roman Empire.

In the Hindu epic Mahabharata, King Bharat denied throne to all his nine sons citing their incompetency. He made 'Bhumanyu', son of Bhardwaj as a king of Hastinapur. Handing over the throne to a competent king, Bharat ingrained the seeds of democracy in

India. He laid three primary duties for any king. First, Justice to country and its people. Second, security of country and its people. And third, competent leadership for country and its people.

In our political context, we find democratic leaders hell bent on establishing their inept offspring even at the cost of nation. Girija Prasad Koirala's attempt to establish Sujata Koirala is one such example. Can a democratic leader of a democratic party put the present and future of an entire party and nation at stake just to see his son or daughter as a next leader?

The Nepali Congress, an oldest democratic party of Nepal has suffered heavy casualty due to Girija Prasad Koirala. State of Congress can be compared to that of the state of 'Hastinapur' that was preparing for war in Dhitarashtra leadership. Mahabharata suggests that Dhitarashtra had only one ambition in life- handover of power to Duryodhan, his son.

Girija Prasad today had similar ambition of handing over the power to his daughter, Sujata. Dhitarashtra was visually challenged, Girija Prasad was not. There is however; one commonality between both- they were politically, morally and spiritually challenged. Moreover; competencies do not matter in politics for majority of leaders in our part of world.

On what moral ground are these leaders talking about democratic alliance? How can they justify that they are the guardians of democracy? Is it not true that democracy was threatened so badly during their tenures? Wasn't the Maoist and ethnic and regional, movements began during democratic governance?

Democracy is a system whereby common people is ensured of equal rights where they can exercise their full participation in the affairs of governance irrespective of their caste, class, culture, sex, language, religion, and region. Why than all identity based movements got initiated in spite of sixteen years of democratic exercise in our country? Unless these issues are addressed; democratic alliance would remain an undemocratic idea failing to enthuse and impact common people.

82 Unfinished Journey

At the other end of the political spectrum, the Maoists have stressed a need for an alliance of republicans and nationalists to defeat the status quo mindset and counter external elements. First, "status quo" and "sustainability" are irrelevant and unscientific terms in a society which is constantly changing and dynamic as all societies are.

Nothing sustains. Everything is in motion, state of change and decay. What is the relevance of a republican-nationalist alliance? Hasn't everybody accepted the Interim Constitution that states that Nepal is a republic? Or do Prachanda and the Maoists think that Nepalese are not nationalists and therefore a nationalist alliance is required?

During all these years right from the start of the Maoist insurgency in 1996 till the present, what kind of mindset have the Maoists institutionalized in Nepal? Who is responsible for violence that prevails across the country? What have the Maoists and Prachanda achieved through bloodshed?

Is it only Maoist violence that has brought change to Nepali society? The answer is a big no. If it were not for the support of those who believed in progressive change and the effects of emerging globalization, localization, information flow and media, there would have not been any change.

In the book, 'Prachanda: The Unknown Revolutionary', Prachanda has stated, "One day, I saw a moneylender insulting my father. My father fell at the moneylender's feet. But the moneylender kicked him. It lit a fire inside me. It was a political lesson I would never forget. It changed the course of my life."

Unfortunately; Prachanda himself has failed to understand how a violent revolution led by him changed the course of many Nepalese lives. If Prachanda learned a political lesson that he would never forget, many Nepalese have not forgotten political lessons that the Maoists' violent revolution taught them.

One cannot end injustice by another injustice. Only justice can end injustice. Proposed republican-nationalist coalitions by the

Maoist try justifying violence for political transformation. Such an alliance cannot guide society towards a peaceful direction. Bowing to radical, criminal and non-democratic characteristics of the "democratic" or the "republican" alliance will lead to further chaos and anarchy.

Nepalese were nothing but an imprisoned conscience trapped between the two extremisms. Unlike millions of Nepalese, I was also imprisoned within myself unable to make any decisions. We were simply left with no options at all. What to do? Where to go? How best could this life be used?

Does our life makes any sense to those who are supposed to be leading us? At times I wonder, don't similar dilemmas prevail among young men and women around the globe whose happiness, dreams, ambitions and even death is at the mercy of politics?

Throughout the world young population more or less maintain a similar worldview. They live in a world of imagination, hope and inclusive progress. They are more attracted towards a world of equal rights, opportunities, and dignity. They visualize world without poverty and a world that thrives with all-round development.

Aspiring for such a world, they fight against each other as Israelis and Hamas, Hutus and Tutsis, Westerns and Eastern, Christians and Muslims, Hindus and Muslims, Blacks and White, and Madhesis and Pahadis.

In spite of similar vision and world-views, young populations throughout the globe fight against each other, representing various camps, ideology and factions. Why? Politics which is guided and controlled by few, manipulates. In our neighboring countries India and Pakistan, young populations are getting involved with a "Jihad" movement. Lack of jobs and extreme religious indoctrination is harboring a suitable context for young population to become 'Jihadis'.

For a single belief, millions of life has been left in squander. What is the use of a belief that makes human lives meaningless?

What is the use of ideology and perspective that limits human merely to a machine? With such indoctrination, can human exercise their free will? Unfortunately; we add meaning to such belief and relate our identity to it. We are the ones limiting our potentialities and bringing us misery.

Religion was one of the prime factors behind the partition of India. The same religion, but played no role when Bangladesh was separated from Pakistan. Ethnicity cleansed Hutus and Tutsis. Ethnicity massacred humanity in Bosnia Hergzovina. Race institutionalized violence and promoted wars between communities and nations. How could a single man, Hitler kill millions of people in the name of race?

In Hinduism, caste system helped oppress millions of people. For an ordinary people like me, it has always been difficult to understand- how are religion, caste, class, race, sex, language and regions that are different variables of 'identities' could be an emancipating indicators? Why would one die for one of these determinants when my identity is beyond such single determinant? Is it not true that millions of people have died in the name of these variables? We have been successfully living with all these identities, but have miserably failed to live as humans.

My identity that has been borne out of religion, caste, class, race, nationalism and region is drenched in the bloods of million dead. To me, my identity stink corpses. I renounce my race, caste and class. I forsake my religion. I reject my ethnicity. That is because I am what I am from within. Religion, caste, class, ethnicity, race, nationalism, region and political ideologies are not my identity. These are outward variables. They do not constitute me entirely. They are mere illusions.

Within me, I am both a beginning and an end. I am a journey and a traveler. And therefore I am content to live as human. Only a free man can explore the unexplored. Humans are today a static being merely the users of old inventions. At the level of idea, nothing illuminating has been explored in the last one hundred years. Material growth has far preceded intellectual and the spiritual one.

In Nepal, perpetual growth of unethical and illogical political desire led to the sharp political polarization. Polarization between the Maoists and non Maoists not only divided the political parties, but even the conscience of common Nepali citizens. What could be more frustrating when one is compelled not to make choices among good or bad, but among the worst?

Options left for Nepalese people were despot communists, corrupt and greedy democrats, violent social and ethnic movements, or a gang of criminals. How can any sane person make choices among these? What can be more devastating to the fate of a nation when free thinkers seize to think? How can a freedom reign when a free will is trapped within a larger politics- Nepali politics that has constantly manipulated lives of common people?

Despite frustrations everywhere, it was November 20, 2008 when I glued myself with the television set to watch an inaugural function of newly elected president of the United States of America, Barrack Hussein Obama. For me, an inaugural function of Obama was the only exciting event that was taking place amidst anarchy and frustrations.

I was thinking if there is any reason for me to feel happy on Obama's victory. And I realized there is so much in common between a leadership that I have imagined for my country and the one that has emerged in the United States. Obama is in fact a reflection of my imagination that was representing my hopes for future. He was my leader symbolizing vision for my own country's leadership. Through Obama, I could feel my dreams coming true.

In an inaugural speech, Obama was installing faith among Americans. The US economy suffered a recession of the magnitude that had never happened in its entire history. American people were living amidst fear of economic misfortune that has fallen on them.

On such time, Obama emerges to claim that this is 'an age of responsibility' and no American should run away from it. Obama was conveying his message to American people, but it was having a deep impact over millions of common people around globe. At least, I was getting influenced.

I realized the time has come for Nepali people to ask their leaders what they deserve. I do not believe that our people deserve the present state of disunity and anarchy. Neither do they deserve an absolute and an authoritarian rule by any single individual or a party. All their life they lived with poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment. As the age of responsibility had begun at the global level through the emergence of Obama, I was expecting the similar discourse to materialize in Nepal.

Could we Nepalese be responsible enough to ask our leaders to be accountable towards us? It is only us who can make our leaders accountable towards us. And what else could be our tribute towards all those martyrs who sacrificed their lives in order to make the state, government, political parties, leaders, and society more responsible so that together we can carve our destiny? One does not stop dreaming fiercely just because the nights are darker.

As I was engrossed with these ideas, I was wondering whether my society is changing to respond my feelings. During June 2009, I had an opportunity to travel to few districts outside Kathmandu valley. The field trip helped me understand that human beings are occupied within the shelves of their negative impulses to such a larger extent that we easily accept abnormalities of life. Normal patterns and ideas becomes abnormal and vice-versa.

Self reflection is an enquiry that questions the integrity and the established realities. We are faced with a process of self reflection many times in our lives. Energy flows while passing through such a process, which ultimately revitalizes our lives. I had a similar experience while traveling to Janakpur, Jaleswor, Birjung, Hetauda and Chitwan.

It was a break from the regularities in many ways. First, it was a revelation of the context and ground realities. Second, it was a direct encounter with lives of varied individuals that was a mixture of agonies, pain and exceptional committed struggle against the adversities of life. Last, but not the least it was an opportunity to understand varieties of uncommon life processes and priorities, and yet a common thread binding all of us together.

It would be a repeated statement to state that unlike in many other parts of Nepal, there is a strong intersection between politics and the criminalization both influencing and interdependent even in Terai. Mr. Sah, 30 driving me from Simra airport to Bardiwas in his Tata Sumo said- 'it is not only the small band of criminal gangs operating in the name of Madhesh liberation, but also the established criminals who have found safe haven in our land. Indian government has adopted a policy of 'crime free zone' for Bihar due to which those operating in India have migrated to our land. Nepali state must act in urgency to identify and differentiate the political and the criminal groups and deal accordingly to make Madhesh a 'crime free zone'.

He further added 'one cannot deny covert misuse of these criminal gangs by established Madhesi parties and their leaders. This has provided criminals with the legitimacy to operate. Even Nepalese security agencies enjoy strong relationship with these criminal gangs as criminals feed in with large chunk of money. Don't you see how cadres of all major political parties enjoy liberty of freely moving in society in spite of their involvement in criminal activities?'

During conversation he also asked if it is possible to retreat citizenship that was provided soon after the Madhesh movement. He added- 'These days I see many new faces in my village who enjoy both Nepalese and Indian citizenship. Instead of providing citizenship to deserving people, our corrupt leaders and bureaucrats have literally sold our citizenship merely in NRS. 3000-5000.

On the other hand, my family members are yet to receive any citizenship. We have become lunatics easily accepting and surviving even in such a context without questioning anything. But I will not give up. I will work hard and make my living. I will live a dignified life and will not submit myself to these social and political forces operating in our society. I have no other option'. Sah was quite vocal on his remarks.

Thanking Mr. Sah for his insights, it was a turn to meet a young

Pahadi chap in Janakpur. Uday was in his late 20's. With his heavy choked voice, he said- 'it has become extremely difficult to survive in Janakpur. Do you know that 1200 houses belonging to Pahadis have been sold since the Madhesh movement? Along with Pahadis, Madhesis have migrated as well. I want to migrate too, but cannot. I have neither money nor any resources to sell. I cannot sell this small house as this can fetch me nothing'.

He continued- 'I might as well die someday when some of the armed outfits may wish to celebrate their anniversary by killing minor Pahadis. Do you know that the late Narendra Khati, an employee of Janakpur Cigarette Factory was killed by armed outfits in order to mark their anniversary? In life, celebrations are many things to many people. For some, it is sharing of sorrows and happiness. For others, it is merry making. And for some others, it is killing of the innocent lives. Probably my death could be a means for celebration!' I had no words for Uday. I simply wanted to skip his staring eyes.

Another important character that I met in Janakpur was Gangiya Devi Ram, a chamar woman. Chamars are those Madhesi Dalits who fall in the lowest strata in Madhesi society. Water offered by them is not accepted by high caste people. One can imagine their status. I have known her for the last twenty years as she worked in our house for almost twenty-five years. She reared me and my two elder sisters.

Gangiya Devi Ram is a woman who is at the bottom of societal hierarchy both in social and economic terms. She is an outcast, like Harijans in India. She shouted 'Sumit babu', moment she saw me. Even from distance she recognizes me. I have never known her as Gangiya Devi Ram, but as 'Piprawali'. In Madhesh, women are nick-named after their parental home. Gangiya Devi was born and brought up in a village called 'Pipra', therefore she is known as 'Piprawali'. She married and settled in Janakpur.

Her husband was a driver working in Janakpur municipality. He used to drink lots of alcohol and beat her. After the death of her

husband, she reared her two sons and later got them married. When I met her at Janakpur after so many years, I saw Piprawali escorting her grandsons to school. She works with the Mother Teresa Higher Secondary School.

I said- 'Good to see you Piprawali. Who are these kids? And where are you heading towards?' 'These are my grandsons and I am taking them to English school. It is important that they should be sent to good school and be successful men in future- she said'. I said- 'Of course they must read and be successful in future and they should love you a lot, isn't it Piprawali?' 'Yes Sumit Babu- she replied'. She enquired about the health of my parents, status of my sisters and about my wife and bidding me goodbye walked towards school.

'Piprawali' is a living example that argues that there are no fundamental differences among classes or castes as propagated and practiced by some. In terms of need, she even argues there are no class divisions at all. People from all class, caste, region and communities want good school, good food and good life for their children and their families.

Is there any difference in aspirations among people who have been claimed to be living in various statuses? Is there a difference between wants and desires of communities of people living in various ethnicities or speaking varied languages? In terms of want; humans of all strata and classes walk the same path, propensity might differ though.

'Piprawali' is even a slap in the face of those who argue for better development strategies. She has carved her development route herself. She knows what to be expected out of whom. She knows how to survive and grow in life. She has proved her merits through her own life struggles. She is a very common life at the lowest strata of society who provides uncommon knowledge and life values to millions of learned ones.

Jaleswor was all together a different experience. Sangita Mishra, 28 had no hesitation to claim that she is HIV infected. 'I do

not trust men, was her opening remarks. 'I really do not know whether a man loves their wife or not. Till my husband lived, I felt he loved me. As I became a HIV infected because of him, I felt cheated. How could he leave me alone with a disease to die?

I die every day because of isolation and the cultural, structural, religious and psychological violence perpetuated by society. Today I care a damn and live my life alone. As long as I survive, I will help infected in every possible ways. Meeting them I feel home'. Sangita was very clear and straightforward.

Sangita's statement-"I do not trust men" left me in introspection. In order to hide his follies, her husband did not even bother to transfer HIV/ AIDS to her. We men do not mind risking lives of our own wives only to hide our follies. No doubt majority of men are cold creatures when it comes to relationships. For many of us, love and relationship has become a trade or a fashion in modern world. It has become physical and cosmetic. It has lost both a moral and spiritual legitimacy.

Urmila Devi Yadav was other character who influenced me deeply when I met her in Birgunj. She was mentally retarded case because of domestic violence. Her husband, Bramahadev Yadav is a president of Mananpur primary school and enjoys good connection with the local political leaders. He walks freely in a society in spite of his criminal action towards his wife. In Hetauda, Mira Lama could not hold her tears back when she revealed that her own husband has forced her for flesh trade to make an earning.

In a first account, no one would identify Ms. Dikschhaya Rimal, a glamorous girl from Chitwan as HIV infected. Always with a big smile on her face, Dikschhaya, 25 rides on her motor-bike in the streets of Chitwan. 'When I am alone in night, I feel haunted with the fact that I am an HIV infected.

Throughout the day nothing bothers me as I am with my friends or at work'. Responding to my query on what drives you in life, she said: 'only the fact that death is inevitable'. An enthusiastic, confident and an upbeat lady is a miss HIV and have lots to offer to life.

Sah, Uday, Gangiya Devi, Sangita, Urmila Devi, Dikschhaya are, but the stark reflection and realities of Nepali society. They are the product of our own follies, structures and hypocrisies. We are in some way or the other responsible for their plight. It is us who are infected, not them.

Some of these characters have been cheated by their own family. And some others are left in isolation by society. Some had a deep agony towards the attitude, norms, behaviors that we as individual display both at a family and at the societal level. And some others spit venom against political actors and their approaches.

These characters are, but only few in thousands and their anger against society, state and our contemporary social, economic, cultural, political, religious thoughts, life values and perspectives is mounting every day. Their rising discontent is the by-product of our collective failure. And against our collective failure, a silent revolution is in the process of making.

Heinrich Heine in his memoirs said: "There is a solidarity of the generations that succeed each other, yea, even [of] the nations that follow each other into the arena...and in the end the whole of mankind is held accountable for the collective assets and liabilities of the past. In the Valley of Joshaphat the Great Debt Register will be destroyed, unless perhaps before that in a universal bankruptcy."

My confidence grew leaps and bounds due to my interaction with these living characters. They were amazing human beings. Death was dancing in its tune right in front of their eyes, yet they enjoyed life struggles. What a commitment towards life. As I returned back to Kathmandu with an upbeat confidence, it took less than a day for the same confidence to shatter into pieces.

It was a month of June 2009 when Nepali media reported a story on the abduction followed by a chilling murder of a nineteen years old girl, Khyati Shrestha who was pursuing her twelfth standard at the Jubilant College and Research Center in Kalimati, Kathmandu. Biren Shrestha (Pradhan) was convicted of murder.

Biren worked as a school teacher with the Adarsh Vidya Mandir (AVM) for fourteen years. He was also a former landlord where Khyati family lived for a while. In a chilling account, he cut Khyati's hands into two parts, legs into three pieces and dumped her head somewhere else. It was news that sent tremor throughout a country.

The cases of kidnapping have become rampant in our country. Hundreds of cases go unnoticed as few dare to inform the police. Kidnapping is thriving as an industry in Nepal. Whether in Kathmandu or in any other parts of our country, situation of law and order is worsening at a greater speed than ever before. According to police reports, there were at least 77 cases of abductions that were reported during 2008-2009.

Absurdity of criminals was on rise. With the help of new technologies, they found new ways of conducting criminal activities. All these were new cases for Nepali people. It was never believed that such a day will ever have to be witnessed. Unemployment was on constant rise. Nepali modernization prescribed certain ways of life. The societal values have eroded so deep that it has failed to hold a belief that 'money should be earned through honesty and hard work'.

Everything is taken for granted. We easily accepted all negative changes forwarded by the Maoists. We failed to question practices that were institutionalized due to their violent movement. We did not question the legitimacy of Maoists when they taught the generation of young people to kill others to preserve one's rights.

How could one distinguish between the actions perpetuated by Biren Shrestha (killer of Khyati) with that of Kali Bahadur Kham who killed Ram Hari Shrestha? Both violated the right to life. Both killed for the sake of money. Biren cut Khyati's body into pieces whereas Kali Bahadur brutally murdered Ram Hari. Biren has been sentenced to jail whereas Kham has been promoted as a central member of the Maoist party. Argument is not in favor of Biren Shrestha, but towards the fact that our leaders enjoy close nexus with the murderers.

Leadership of our country is largely responsible for the present state of affairs. Criminals are safeguarded and used by them to materialize their political aims. It has not been distant past when the vice chancellor of the Tribhuvan University, Professor Madhav Sharma was mistreated and manhandled by a group of students associated with the youth wing of Maoist party. A group of students associated with the Nepali Congress beat up the campus chief, Devi Dutta Sah of Rajbiraj Campus at the gunpoint.

To my dismay, instead of imprisoning those hooligans, all major political parties came together to force the security agencies for their release. In today's Nepal, our political parties and their youth organizations can hardly disassociate them with violence and criminality. As per the law of land, they are criminals. The magnitude may vary, but they are indeed responsible in fuelling crime in society.

Today Nepali society has become largely criminalized. We failed to question the practices of elite who taught us to subjugate the downtrodden to preserve their privileges. We failed to question the morale of middle class that kept violating the laws of the land. We failed to question the Nepalese modernity that has institutionalized hypocrisy in the name of development.

In some way or the other, I find most of Nepalese taking law into their hands. Many of us fall in the ranks and files of law violators. Some openly does it. And some does it by disguising themselves in some other professions.

It was Saturday the 27th of June 2009; I was scheduled to meet Gagan. Different dimensions proliferate whenever I meet him. Whenever I get frustrated, I generally talk to him. In many occasions, I have raised level of my confidence by talking to him. That day he was not in an upbeat mood either. Same day he met Khyati's parents. As a parliamentarian, I have seen him working hard for the fundamental rights committee in constituent assembly.

Prior to meeting Khyati's parents, he had spent six hours with the Maoist constituent assembly members. He told me- 'the Maoist

constituent assembly members are not progressive, but regressive in nature'. I asked- 'Why did you say that?' 'They are merely parrots who only recite few words like feudalism, imperialism, and expansionism. Don't you think these words have been coined by Marx and Mao way back in the 19th century?'

The Maoist's have neither ideas nor inventions for the 21st-century world. They do not want to move further, but backward. It is therefore they are regressive force, not us' - he replied.

We were supposed to talk about activities of secretariat that we have been jointly working for. Since the last two months, I had been investing some of my time in the 'office of Parliamentarian Gagan Thapa.' Together we organized several rounds of interaction programs in the issues of health, education and food security for fundamental rights committee. We interacted with professionals so that Gagan could incorporate some of the ideas and feedbacks in the new constitution received out of those interactions.

I asked him- 'With all anarchy and disorder around us, how would it be possible to hold our spirit tight and keep working? I can let go my life. But in next couple of years, I would have my kids. I cannot risk their life. What kind of society will we be handing to our kids?'

What kind of values are we thinking to impart them? What kind of political system would they enjoy? What would they learn from their elder, parents and teachers? Would they even survive for long? Or would they be kidnapped and killed inhumanely unlike Khyati?'

I continued- 'There are chances that our children could turn to one of those who believe in becoming rich overnight no matter what means and approach they might have to adopt. I am afraid they could even be one of those criminals. We did not join politics just to watch whatever is going around us. We have a distinct mission. We do not want power, but we are for a society that promotes tolerance, dignity and prosperity for all.

Further I said- 'Nation is fast sliding towards failure, but we

could do nothing to prevent it from disaster. What is the point of living if not for a cause? What is the point of sticking with a political party that can hardly change or could act as a change agent? Nepali Congress is losing both its political and social legitimacy. Let us use this one year in planning and working for a new political party. We may not reach to power, but we can at least live a fulfilled life'.

I vent my entire frustrations over him. But Gagan kept listening. That day, he was both physically and mentally exhausted. Finally, we parted on a positive note with an agreement of meeting the next day.

I had been arguing for a need of a new political party even prior to election of the constituent assembly. Then I told Gagan – 'this is the right time to get started with a new party. As old parties are losing their legitimacy, it is only the new ones comprising with young population that could blend new ideas and vision can contribute to a nation building'.

Gagan kept him mum, but I was a minority voice in a group of our friends who suggested it would be suicidal to move for a new party. And the dominance of such voice is still in majority. Our friends suggested capitalizing fifty years of glorious history of Nepali Congress. To me- 'Past can only guide future. It cannot overpower present and future. Our present was rapidly changing. And Nepali Congress had only the static past with it'.

On June 28, 2009, result of the School leaving Certificate was made public. Altogether 68.47 percent students passed the SLC breaking all time record in its 75 years history. With such an outstanding result, I was happy that our next generations of youth were all set to precede us with space, time, technology, and knowledge. We wanted to be outsmarted. Life though will not be an easy for them. They have to understand the dilemmas of nation and live up with the context that is both frustrating and challenging.

Fund for Peace, Washington based organization had placed Nepal in the category of countries like Somalia, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and North Korea that make up the list of

countries infected by conflict, corruption, poverty, impunity and statelessness.

The generation next has a capability of turning our failure to success. However, there are limitations in them as well. They are extremely smart in using computers, but not theorizing concepts that invented it. They are equally active in copying western music, but not inventing and adding any milestones to it. They have been advocating global fashion, music, and hip-pop culture, but are clueless on how best could they could attune it for the welfare of our country.

They want to grow and turn rich overnight, but not with inventions and labor. They criticize everyone for failing to provide them with the workable system, but they break system in every possible ways. They want to be at the top of the hierarchy, but have not set any moral codes or values in achieving that. Everything western is modern for them.

They must understand that criminals have capitalized politics because they generally hate it. They should not have a luxury of becoming successful unless they create an environment for them where everyone can positively compete for success. Our life values are at risk and it is they who must come forward to challenge those risks for our collective achievements. They are a generation with merits. They must prove it whenever country demands.

On a political front, the peace process has come to a deadlock due to the polarization between political parties in the issue of the presidential move. The Maoist had padlocked the parliament for the last two months. As for the consensus, Maoist's had proposed two options. Either the move of the presidential reinstating the chief of Army is termed unconstitutional or the constitution be amended clearly outlining the roles for a prime minister and the President.

In recent past, the national and international political context had not been in favor of the Maoist. At one hand, the death of Prabhakaran in Sri Lanka sent a strong message and at the other, they were not yet removed from the list of terrorists that was labeled

to them by the United States since the beginning of the armed insurgency.

To make the matter worse, on June 22, 2009 the Indian authorities formally banned and labeled Indian Maoists, terrorist. At a national level, all major and minor political parties had come together to form a government against the Maoists, and internationally they were not trusted anymore either by India or by US. In spite of such state, Maoist decided to move alone.

They withdrew their support to Madhav Nepal led government they had provided for a month. They claimed that the deadline they gave to the government to correct the presidential move has come to an end. Maoist formally began their movement. Until December 2009 the Maoist movement had little impact.

With the growing distance among political parties and the Maoist, many started doubting the fate of new constitution that was yet to be drafted. On July 2009 I was invited to attend a meeting from the 'Nationwide Youth Pressure Campaign for Constitution making (NYPCC)'. NYPCC is a network and group of thirty two non-profit organizations working together to pressurize the political parties for timely and quality constitution.

They wanted me to be an active participant of the movement. I readily accepted. Majority of people involved in movement were youngsters who wanted a defining role for them. After all, it was a defining moment. At one hand, we had an opportunity to draft the constitution, settle the political, social, economic and cultural issues and set the country in a path of economic development. And at the other, we could have easily become one of the failed states. Young population involved in movement wanted to wage a last battle for the sake of country and themselves.

The movement was not funded by any donors or international agencies. It is important to clarify economic sources of movement as one finds the encroachment of international funding in every sector and spheres of Nepali life. In the streets of Kathmandu, students used to carry a long cloth and ask for money with the Nepali people.

They printed some half jumpers which were sold so that money collected out of it could be used for a cause.

Rajkumar Pathak, a jubilant young guy was expressing his sadness over the remarks made by common people over his jumpers. "Everyone is behind donor funding. Please give us some jumpers as well." He literally had a very tough time convincing those that these are not donor funded, but the groups of young people have come together for a special cause-constitution making.

The expressions made by common people towards Pathak have not grown over night. It has a long history of frustration, inefficiency, hypocrisy and corruption attached to both the national and international agencies. It is a reality that international funding has become a strong part of Nepali lives, without which survival seems impossible.

Nationally we have hardly any institutions that are not corrupt. We have hardly individuals that seek prosperity through the prosperity of others. An individual cannot triumph without a triumphant team; a country cannot prosper unless we collectively grow. We are hardly a breed of community that seeks to grow together. We try to grow at the expense of others' demise. We try to reach zenith by pulling others to nadir.

Nepali zenith is fixed and defined. It has vulgar characteristics. Variables that define these characteristics are food to eat, house for a family, good schools for children, ornaments for women, and a car for men. We have no capacity of innovating anything further. We live our entire life pulling, pushing and exerting pressure to achieve these variables in our lives. A Nepali life- We are a short people, living with dwarfed ideas.

As a writer, I was assigned to lobby with columnists who could pen down their thoughts in favor of the movement. I accepted it. In the same evening I arranged a meeting with Rajaram Gautam, an op-ed editor from the Kantipur daily.

On the same day, the Kantipur editorial had hinted on the possibility of country sliding towards some form of dictatorial rule in

the pretext of security. As law and order situation in country was deteriorating, psychologically people were more interested in security related issues compared to that with the constitution making process.

Rajaram said- "In the recent past if you look closely, people have started appreciating the efficiency of our police force. Our police force has found hands, legs and head of Khyati, but why is that it failed to nab the criminal before the crime was committed? Our security personals, are today successful in nabbing anti- social elements, but only after the crime have been committed.

He further said- 'At the one end, there is no end to the rising criminality and at the other; there is no decrease in the efficiency of a police force. Slowly security forces will be portrayed as institutions that can guide nation from the existing anarchy. Brother it is all good with the movement that is focused with a timely constitution making. And in fact, no one would dare to deny with this agenda. But country is slowly drifting somewhere else."

After listening to him, I argued-"What were we to do then? Should we keep ourselves quiet just because some forces want to drift country towards the civil war? Don't you think the logic for such a campaign is even timelier?" He readily accepted, but I could clearly figure out pessimism in his approach and body language.

It was July 4, 2009 when my brother-in-law came to my house for a dinner. He declared- 'I am leaving Nepal now. I do not think that I will be back again. I am worried about my two small daughters. No one knows when will they be kidnapped or killed.' I could not utter a word. My niece, Rushali who is eleven years old told me- "It is not you who are in tension or at risks, it's us. While returning back from school, I always tell my mom to hold my hand tightly so that no one can take me away from her."

Except looking at her, I could do nothing. Pulling back my strength, I asked my brother-in-law 'are you truly happy with your decision?' 'Who would be happy to leave behind the country, where you were born and brought up? I have but no choice, he replied'. I

had neither courage nor any morale left to defend the politics, economy, crumbling institutions of my country. Inwardly I was apologizing with my small niece for not been able to do anything for her. They not only left the house, but also left me on deep pain and agony.

Nepali society was losing its hope. Courage was defeated at the hands of anarchy. Morals were diminished at the hands of opportunism. Values were shattered at the hands of criminalization. Tyranny of the few subjugated the happiness of all. It was a cruel society we were living with. The state was losing its legitimacy to rule.

It was only in recent past when media reported about the migration of the Sikh and Marwari community from Birgunj to India. The Sikhs and Marwaris were like our own brothers, living by our side for centuries. Theoretically, it was not a partition per se, practically it was. People were migrating from their own country where they lived their entire life. Their own home was unsafe for them.

And none of the outsiders, but we Nepalese are largely responsible for this. Nepali race is about to exterminate itself from the pages of civilization in the same fashion like the 'Yadavas' during the rule of lord Krishna. We were on the verge of collapse. Process has begun long ago. Repercussions of which are felt today.

On July 17, 2009 I was invited for a dinner by an army chief, Rookmangad Katwal. I readily accepted. I never had met him before, but have heard many things about him. It was a rumor in the capital that he had been meeting many people and interacting on political issues. I assumed that I am also going to be a part of similar process. In the evening at around 7.20, I reached his residence along with Pradip Poudyal, president of the Nepal Student Union.

I introduce myself to him- 'Sumit Sharma Sameer, a journalist'. He asked- 'what journalist? We have many kinds of journalists?' I realized he has a direct, satirical and dictatorial way of responding. Sensing the threat of getting overpowered, I loudly

claimed- 'freelance journalist.' During the further conversation he laid down three propositions to me- 'We have only three choices. First, either surrender. Second, travel to Banaras. Or third, choose to fight. I choose the third one. Which one will you choose, he asked?'

Avoiding his three propositions I said - 'the country got polarized in favor and against you and the president not because people admire you and president as individuals, but because both of you stood against the Maoists attempt of capturing the entire state. Nepali society has fluctuating characteristics. You were admired on one particular context. If you think you would retain same admiration for your future political moves if you have any, you are wrong'.

I further said- 'You as an individual have done enough; you should pave the leadership for the generation next now. This will be beneficial for both you and the institution. He asked me- 'why do you have doubts whether I will give up my post or not?' I replied- 'Mr. Chief, forget about me or any individual, but it's a rumor in the capital'.

Looking at me, he said- 'Nepali Army is not bothered with any rumors. It follows its own course. We have a national character. We follow existing rule and the supremacy of the civilian government'. He forcefully stressed on two elements, 'existing laws' and 'civilian government'. He further added, 'we have proved our commitments to the supreme parliament. We did not rally behind the king, when the supreme parliament asked him to abdicate the throne. I was even labeled traitor. But I had to work on the larger interest of my institution and my country'.

'By the way, what's your opinion about an army-he asked?' I replied- 'Mr. Chief, I am a staunch congress supporter and a democrat. My family has been associated with this party for the last three generations now. I have seen army surrounding my house when they wanted to take my father to prison during movement against the Panchayat regime. I was a kid then. What image would any kid have towards the army that surrounded his house and

wanted to take his father to prison? Mr. Chief, I think you can imagine my perception towards army'.

After dinner, I and Pradip said goodbye to him. 'Pradip, I think he will give up his service in time. What do you think' - I asked? He replied straightaway- 'if that is the case, why did he invite us for a dinner?' I came back home dropping him at Jamal. I could not conclude anything about the intention of the Chief of army. I narrated the entire story and shared my confusions with my father. Once again I was in dilemma and was an imprisoned conscience. My father told me- "don't worry and sleep tight because there is only one certain thing about our country, and that is its uncertainty."

Chapter 3

New Context: Moment of Choice

*A*s Nepal was strolling in the path of uncertainties, the global world order was trying to reshape itself out of chaos and uncertainties. On February 2, 2009 I received a call from my elder sister, Sweta from Chennai, India. My sister has been residing in India since the past twelve years. It amazes me the way she talks Tamil.

Over the phone she sounded low. She told me- 'My Company has reduced my salary by 10,000. Since I am a permanent staff of company I still hold my job, but new staffs have been left out with no jobs. Do not panic. We have to feel fortunate that we still have job with us'.

Unlike many families around the world, my family could not escape the global recession. Television channels and print media reported that Nepalese labor force that migrated to Gulf countries in millions, are returning back. The companies overseas were cutting down their size. Brunt of which was falling upon the international labor force. Nepalese labor forces were no exception.

Report published by the International Labor organization was further raising alarm. It claimed- "global unemployment in 2009 could increase over 2007 by a range of 18 million to 30 million workers, and more than 50 million if the situation continues to

deteriorate. That could raise the world's jobless total to 198 million, or 230 million people in the worst case scenario."

Nepal was definitely to have an impact of such a devastating global scenario. One of the pillars of Nepalese economy has been remittance industry, which particularly, swelled-up after the Maoists insurgency in 1996. We are living in a globalized world order. Whatever happens in one part of the world; the other part is affected. Recession in the United States had a global impact. Nepal was therefore not an exception. Impact may be less to the countries at periphery, however impact remains.

Can we remain indifferent to a global climate change? Are we not feeling heat of deteriorating climate? Are we not exposed to the vulnerability of swine and bird flu? On June 29, 2009 the Ministry of Health and Population reported about three Nepalese, who were infected by swine flu. They brought flue along with them while returning back from the United States.

Won't there a change in our political landscape, ideologies and systems as tide of changes sweeps across Europe, America and Asia? Can success of 1990 people's movement for democracy can be attributed only to internal political forces? Was it not the global age of democratization that helped us achieve democracy for us? Impact and speed of globalization has in fact increased both in its speed and magnitude.

Globalization in Nepal dates back to centuries. Culture, fashion, religions, political systems that one finds in Nepal is not absolutely Nepali in its origin. Some features of Nepali society are uniquely 'Nepali' but many have been imported to Nepal. Religions like Hinduism, Christianity and Islam have made its route to Nepal from many places.

When Hindus were attacked by Mughals in India, they found safe haven in Nepal. Buddhism is unique to our country. Young Siddhartha who later became Lord Buddha was born in Kapilavastu, Nepal. Buddha propagated Buddhism throughout the world. Nepal has, therefore both imported and exported religion.

One can find the references of special types of Nepali woolen blankets in Kautilya's Arthashastra. These woolen blankets were exported to Magadha Kings from Nepal. Distinct type of pagodas and an architectural innovation that one finds in China have been exported by a Nepali sculptor, Arniko. Nepal thus exported art as well.

By 1793 Nepal imported English broadcloths in order to use it in military uniforms. Monumental architectural buildings that are made by various Nepalese governments at different times have been imported from Europe. Traders, Princesses, Artists, Religion, Political refugees have found safe haven in Nepal.

Some migrated to Nepal from India in order to escape political extremism. Some others migrated to find meaning and values of life in the foothills of Himalayas. Many Yogis and Sanyasis migrated from India to Nepal and propagated spiritual philosophies. Trend continues till date. Globalization therefore has been in a process since long.

The concept of globalization itself is unique. It paves the way for learning, knowing, and togetherness. It would have not been possible for me to understand and learn varied culture had I not received an opportunity to be a part of the London School of Economics. The world looked pretty small to me in our NGO Management and Social Policy classes.

My friends represented Europe, America, Africa, Australia, and Asia. They brought their unique lifestyles and local knowledge with them. I carried my Nepaliness with me. They influenced me and I influenced them. Globalization to me is, therefore a multi-dimensional influence. It is the co-existence of all with the co-existence of self. Globalization is a zenith of human civilization.

Globalization is not a planned process. It is a natural process. It would have taken place even without a World Bank or International Monetary Fund. It would have existed even without the United Nation or international civil society organizations.

Globalization is human innovation. Thrust for growth, human inquisitive nature, human impulses, and human necessities have resulted to globalization. Globalization in some or other form will exist unless man-kind exists. Globalization itself is unique, the practice however is faulty.

Practice of globalization lacks equal justice. It lacks equal freedom. It is a subjugation of small by big. It is an exploitation of poor by rich. It is a biased process where millions are left with hunger, exploitation and undignified life.

It is a flawed modernity where few live and million die. It is an arrogant intelligence where specific knowledge ignores the larger whole. It is a world where few remains human while others ceases to be so. In theory globalization is virtue. In practice, it is vice. Vice must be turned to virtue.

Globally capitalism has been questioned from all quarters today. The liberal economic policy that boldly challenged socialism has been today re-challenged for the errors seen in the liberal financial order. Capitalism based on free market economy has been today confronted with itself. And it is today that it is finding quite difficult to prove its merit.

At the global level ideas and ideologies are fiercely contesting against each other trying hard to establish and prove their own merits. No one knows which one will triumph over, but one thing is clear- human affairs that are not based on human values will surely meet a failure. Recently speaking at the Congress in the United States; British Prime minister Gordon Brown emphasized on a free, but a value-based market. He outlined that the risks people take should not be free from the responsibilities they need to meet.

We are living in time of great inventions. Principles, systems and ethos we practiced unhindered for the last hundred years and more have now been seriously challenged. We must provide an option. Solution for a global recession, global warming, global terrorism, and global health issues has to be there. World must find creative options to move forward.

Can it be claimed that death of Prabhakaran in Sri Lanka is a death of terrorism in the world? Or was it an ethnic cleansing of the highest order? What lessons would Tamils around the globe would derive from the suppression of their movement? The role of the state and government will remain as one of the greatest challenge in modern times. How will state respond to different forms of extremisms in future?

Can there be new ways of thinking where solution is not sought by cleansing one against another? What are the ways forward? How could Prabhakarans' and the Osamas' need to be dealt in future? How swine, bird and future flues could be tackled? These are important questions of our time.

Journey ahead cannot be simple only by outlining solutions for the present crisis alone. The important questions; however are- where are we heading towards with all changes that are rapidly proliferated at the global level? Are these temporary threats or many more threats of the highest magnitude yet to come? What kind of relations would state have with its citizens in future?

What kind of role would market adopt? What is there in store for civil society? What kind of social relationships are we going to maintain tomorrow? What kind of social values and ideas are awaiting us? What form and structure would family have? Will we live in harmony with the nature or keep extracting everything unethically? Answers to these questions are complex; however time has come to raise these questions now.

Each day 600 people die in Kenya due to HIV/ AIDS. One can easily understand the complexities of threats we live in modern world. We are circled with greater threats today and the solution we devise to tackle these threats will further define human civilization.

Humanity today is faced with simultaneous set of crisis situations that can create a 'civilization' crisis. With every crisis there is an opportunity. And we stand on the verge of one such opportunity that can transform the entire global system.

There cannot be a set of fixed financial, social, economic and political philosophies and policies which could solve the problems overnight. Neither have we had any sciences that can help us eradicate issues instantly. We have traveled far and wide with the help of various theories, political "isms", thought processes and our own actions and behavior. Time seems to have come to get back to our 'self' to understand reality in truest sense. And reality seems to be very difficult to be understood.

We have basically lived with the theory of outmaneuvering one another. Rich countries have tried outliving the poor ones. Theories and knowledge have tried subjugating the perspective of others'. Science has outsmarted religion, while religion has ridiculed science. Tradition has condemned modernity, while modernity finds tradition superfluous. Centrality blames diversity as divisive, whereas diversity labels centrality as subjugation.

Capitalism label socialism a 'lie', while socialism depicts capitalism 'hypocrisy'. Elite blame underprivileged classes for propagating violence, while underprivileged violently kill elite for establishing and entrenching the structural violence. Maoism sees every other political theories 'corrupt and nepotistic' whereas democratic theorist label Maoism with criminality.

We are against each other. We are failed co-existentialists. We human beings are adamant to wage war against each other. This attitude and understanding has completely failed us. We define success through the prism of 'self' gratification. In a process of securing success for our 'self'; we butchered everyone.

We humiliate and downgrade others' for our own 'self'. And for success, individual solely concentrate on 'self'. Individuals see no one except its 'self'. Seeking real 'self' is a journey towards emancipation. However, our 'self' is neither inward nor outward.

World would have moved towards right direction had focus of the individual 'self' not have confined to the material level alone. An individual is, basically a society. Individuals invent society. Society is largely a by-product of individuality.

Concentration in individual is, therefore an interest in the larger society. There is nothing wrong in getting engrossed with 'self'. What is fundamentally important is to explore what that 'self' is seeking? Today human 'self' seeks more and more of the material possessions, success and security.

We want to be secure from terrorists, therefore we kill them. Terrorists want to proclaim their rights, therefore they kill their subjugators. We need wealth, therefore exploit any resources that can generate it. We buy money at the cost of natural destruction. We do not seek our success constructively, but destructively.

Corruption, greed and envy that we see proliferated in our society are in fact institutionalized within us. Fundamentally, we are real problems. These are negative forces. And unless such forces continue to rule; individuals, societies and countries will keep waging war and propagating hatred.

Moment we define our locus positive, course of individual life would change; ultimately challenging and changing the path of society and nation. We need to change our course from within to change our society at large. What could be the defining philosophy to change us from within?

Could anyone guide us to that? Are there any short-cuts? Changing our society largely depends upon understanding our real 'self'. And largely an individual 'self' is corrupt, war seeker and nepotistic. And unless such 'self' is challenged - peace will remain an illusion.

Our inner 'self' today is crippled with desire. Desire for more and more and for unethical growth. Desire for power to replace others. Desire for wealth to rule others. Desire for knowledge to outsmart others. Desiring is not wrong in itself. Neither are variables like wealth, knowledge and power wrong.

What is fundamentally wrong is how those variables are used and prioritized? Are they used for human liberation or subjugation? Are they used for prosperity of all or the few? Are they used for

respect and identity of all or for the few? What is rather important is whether these variables have been used or abused?

Throughout the world we see threats perpetuated due to HIV/AIDS. We find commitments and resources to eradicate it. On the parallel basis we find networks and groups that thrive because of same HIV/AIDS. We have threats, but there are stronger unethical networks that thrive through such threats.

Our commitments are losing battle against those strong networks. Our commitment has been today challenged by these black marketers. Our dedication is in question today. Our moral stand and perspective has been made irrelevant.

With corruption being entrenched in all walks of life, anti-corruption movement is losing its legitimacy. With violence and killing becoming part of our lives and politics, 'life' has lost its meaning. Due to the commercialization of our relationships with each other, social fabrics are withering away.

Just have a look at our social relationships. Sons and daughters have no respect for parents. They are largely occupied with the gadgets because parents have no time for their children. Neighbors are not bothered about their surroundings. Communities are no more interested in living in harmony. Ethnicity propagates violence and hatred rather than ensuring rights for them.

Love for money has led people into treading any route unscrupulously. Everything has been compromised. How far can we travel in such a course? What is the limitation of human wants? Are those wants negative or positive? If men wants cannot be checked, is it possible to divert those wants towards positive direction?

Otherwise how could it be possible for us to find a solution for our self, society and world that have been crippled with desires, crises and threats? What is a meeting point? Where and how can we negotiate with our wants? What are those 'impulses' that are fundamentally important in understanding human? How can we

guide those impulses towards a direction that can bring happiness to our lives?

We are living a chaotic life. Our surrounding has become more and more complex. Such situation exists not only for American or Jews; neither to British or Blacks alone, but to the entire human community. Theories are scientific prediction based upon systems that are profoundly disordered in nature. How can theories hold true when the systems are constantly changing?

One cannot expect nature, systems, state and society to function in an ordered sequence. Nothing is either smooth or linear in motion. A minor change in the prevailing condition can change the predictability of the entire context. Ian Stewart in his book, 'Does God Play Dice? The Mathematics of Chaos' has argued that atmosphere would have severe repercussions in the long run even through the flapping of one single butterfly.

Basic principles outlining linear development of society, economy, religion and science have been constantly questioned today. Can science alone outline or explain human existence in its entirety? Not at all. Existentialism which is the product of the twentieth century world argues that human existence cannot be elaborated either through science or religion.

How can science alone construct a perspective of human existence when the same existence can be completely altered through the genetic codes? Haven't an invention of bio-technology completely changed the way we have been analyzing about human existence?

Moreover, the universality of classical science has been today challenged due to the uncertainty that has become an integral part of most of the scientific discoveries. Quantum mechanics today questions the 'certainty' - the very core notion of classical sciences.

With such a newer context and new ideas at the helm, how are we to respond these challenges together as a unified nation is a fundamental question that I believe is integral both to national and

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my personal journey? For me, finding the ways out is to provide meaning to my personal life. It is to lead a meaningful life.

In order to try making sense of my life to myself, I started looking closely to histories, events, values and cultures that has shaped me as an individual. Plainly speaking, I have found some despotic values within me that seek to dominate others. Such a value I believe has been inculcated on me by politics, history, events and a culture of my own society.

Thomas Mann once remarked, 'In our time, the destiny of man presents its meaning in political terms'. Nepalese political history is largely a struggle for a political power for self rule. And I can feel myself growing as a man wanting to rule over others. And most of 'we Nepalese' have adhered to this common values system. It is therefore we largely value only 'us' not 'others'.

Let us have a brief glance in the development trajectory of our political history which provides clarity in defining us as individuals and society. Nepal as a country has traveled far and wide. An ancient Nepal that was once divided into various independent states, marched towards a single nation state through unification. Prithivi Narayan Sah played a significant role in unification, he initiated it. Unfortunately, modern Nepal failed to fix solid relationships with its various caste and communities.

Shah Kings became ruler of our country unless their power was hijacked by the Rana oligarchy. The rule of Rana family lasted for 104 years. With the revolution of 1950, Ranas were overthrown with the semi-democratic form of government. In the name of various political experiments, democratically elected government was replaced with the autocratic Panchayat, where king assumed absolute power in 1960. After struggling for 30 yrs, Democracy was restored in Nepal in 1990.

Democratic political parties vied sharply against each other to capitalize the entire power. Maoist's rebellion began in 1996 because of many reasons. One of the important reasons has been the failure of successive democratic governments to cater to the

needs of common people. But even the hidden agenda of the Maoists was only to capitalize 'power'.

With ten years of conflict, Maoist's finally agreed to enter the peace process with political parties. The movement against the autocratic rule of king Gyanendra was launched in April 2006 by the Maoists and other political forces. With the success of the movement, Maoist's formally entered the peace process. The interim constitution was drafted. The Madhesh and various ethnic and social movements questioned the legitimacy of the interim constitution.

The Madhesh movement compelled political stakeholders to incorporate 'federation' within the constitution. Nepal thus became 'Federal Democratic Republic'. An election to the constituent assembly was held. The Maoists, once the armed rebellion force became a largest party in the constituent assembly. Maoist's formed the coalition government.

By assuming the thirty percent of the popular votes, they moved further to capitalize the state 'power'. Other non-Maoist's forces wanted to check the Maoists' rampant abuse of power. Clash therefore erupted under the pretext of Chief of Army, price of which was paid with the exclusion of the Maoist's from the government. And today Non-Maoist's forces are in power. An unchecked struggle for power that began with the formation of nation state still goes on.

This is however not to minimize or delegitimize various other socio-economic and cultural waves that were undercurrent during various times of Nepalese history which compelled for a change. Since politics has dominated almost all spheres of our society, there is a greater contest in a field of politics.

The prime interest for all political stakeholders remained occupying the central political stage by 'capitalizing state power'. With such a self centered struggle, we have today lost the legitimacy of state; nevertheless we are in a process of transforming the structure of the state itself.

The social and political institutions and its leaders play a

constructive and crucial role in any country that aims to settle and stabilize the post conflict issues and traumas. Responsibility falls upon the leadership of these institutions to manage conflict and address the aspirations of common men and women of society. Unfortunately; many of our social and political leaders and institutions have been discredited due to their rampant run for power.

But such a process began long ago. Common citizens of this country have always been left as an orphan constituency whose aspirations are thrown away as useless entity. Our innovations have been killed and frustration injected so deep that it will take long time to revitalize us as society and a nation.

For me, the political journey of my country is an ugly travelogue. Human lives never seem to have any space in our journey. Probably, Kenneth Monigue is correct to say, 'Politics is the activity by which the framework of human life is sustained; it is not life itself'. Our leaders therefore do not live lives, but are merely involved in cosmetic activities. They need to transform. We need to transform.

Transformation is always a rigorous process. We can even witness that in our own individual lives. How long does it take for us to change our own habits and roles? How often do we decide to change at the first place? If at all we decide, what kind of rigorous and challenging process we walk through to bring such changes?

Nepal is in the state of transformation. Some wants to transform her dramatically and drastically. Some others want the same transformation through the evolutionary process, while some others want a transformation that is both evolutionary and revolutionary. Some wants to bring radical changes in some sectors, whereas adopt evolutionary approach for some other sectors.

With various struggles and outputs capitalized thus far, we can optimistically claim that we as a country have a capacity to move towards the right direction. However, there are many hurdles for our march towards progressive, secular, and inclusive democratic

country. And one of such stumbling stone is our attitude that devalues the coexistence and cooperation.

On June 4, 2009 speaking at the Cairo University in Egypt the President of the United States of America, Barrack Obama extended his 'assalaamu alaykum' to Muslim communities and to world. It was neither a coincidence nor a desperate attempt of winning the hearts and minds of Islamic community alone. It has rather a deep and larger meaning that was trying to redefine the nature and trend of future international politics.

Speech of Obama was based upon the analysis and underlying trends drawn from the social, political, economic, cultural and scientific sector. Emphasis was thus made on "co-existence and cooperation" as the viable weapon to counter the threats facing modern world. Message of 'co-existence and cooperation' reiterated by Obama was fundamentally different with that of the rhetoric of Nepalese political leaders. We have been repeating the slogan to an extent of even discrediting such a meaningful political approach.

Time has called for an identification and rectification of the root causes of obstacles that is hindering our progress. And one such important issue is 'our political stakeholders cannot simply walk together for the larger interest of our nation'. At times I ponder what have been the reasons for political actors and stakeholders to staunchly vie against each other. Political differences and power game could have been understood as a natural political process during normal time.

Why but our political actors put their preferences at the top even during a time when coming together and working together is the only options to pull country out of utter mess? Why is that we become so self-centered even during the most difficult times? And this trend is not confined within politics alone. Politics is merely a reflection of our larger society that we live in. Such attitude can be found among social, economic, political and religious institutions and individuals. Why?

To answer such a complex question, I think we must delve deep into our social, political and cultural historical growth. Historically, we have believed ourselves as a superior race. Our actions are guided by such belief. History suggests that people of any caste group and religion had to purify themselves before entering Nepal in the past. Even Hindus and Newars were compelled to bathe for forty days with cow's urine, drink the same and had to eat cow dung to purify them.

During that time our rulers made all people walk the purification process, claiming that only through such a process they can be Nepalese. And in those days, anyone who used to migrate from other territory or countries were held impure, as it was believed that outsiders have been ruled by impure monarchs following impure religion.

There are evidences that claim that Nepalese envoy in Tibet had to pass through three days of purification process at Nuwakot prior to returning back to Kathmandu. Only water offered by king would have purified them.

Such a belief was entrenched and practiced by the rulers of modern Nepal as well. Much later Jang Bahadur Rana in his preface to the 1866 regulations on religious endowments claimed: "We have our own country, a Hindu kingdom, where the law prescribes that 'cows shall not be slaughtered,' nor women and Brahmans sentenced to capital punishment; a holy land where the Himalayas, the Basuhi Ksetra, the Arya tirtha, and the refulgent Sri Pasupati linga and Sri Guhyesvari Pitha are located. In the Kali age this is the only country in which Hindus rule."

In order to re-establish the legitimacy of the rule, king Mahendra applied the concept of service towards deity as a service towards nation in the post 1960 era. And he established Vishnu as such a deity. It soon became easy to equate king with Lord Vishnu as Hindu scripture prescribes king as Vishnu. In our country, rulers have established themselves as a superior being claiming themselves to be as pure as the lord himself.

Such a belief system that was once confined among rulers and the institutions of the past has been entrenched and institutionalized in the lives of common individual where people with power and capital believes themselves superior to others.

In the past, it were only monarchs who claimed themselves as pure and unchallenged, but in today's Nepal we have many social, economic, political leaders who find them, their ideas, their beliefs, their isms, their party, and their cadres extremely powerful and pure. Guided by such a belief, they outcast every others who do not fall within their defined boundary.

Common people of Nepal are outcast for failing to fall within a defined boundary. And being overpowered with such understanding and belief, our leaders clash against each other to establish their pure system and thought processes. There is, therefore a constant struggle against each other.

How can we call those leaders democratic and inclusive who only find their beliefs, thoughts and actions pure? How can Maoist's guarantee the prosperity of entire mass when they claim to be representing certain class and have been trying to outcast the rest?

How can Nepali Congress claim to be representing the downtrodden by practicing extreme rightist liberalism? How is it possible to bring country out of mess when there are various conflicting thought processes, where individual political parties are hell-bent in affirming that it is only their way of thinking that can salvage a nation?

Often we find our politicians and leaders detached from common people. Not only are they aware of the plights of commons, but are relatively insensitive towards it. Positioning themselves as leaders, they are often encircled with their egos that constantly tell them that they have a superior function to deliver rather than immediately serving the needs of masses. For them, serving people is not their responsibility, but the responsibility of our over-populated and inefficient bureaucracy.

No one can deny with such a claim. One of the fundamental duties of bureaucracy is to serve the mass. What is rather disturbing is the 'equidistance' that our leaders maintain while mobilizing our bureaucracy and administration. It is but the close ones associated with those leaders who generally mobilize the entire bureaucracy and state power.

Those closed ones are agents who facilitate between the leader and bureaucracy. Prakash Dahal ruled Nepal when his father Prachanda was a prime minister, and Sujata Koirala ruled when her father, Girija Prasad Koirala was a prime Minister. In fact, this trend has a historical route.

Nepal as a nation was not an intact territorial boundary. Neither was it a country with unified and coherent customs, cultures, norms or values. Rulers used to assign local influential man within village or province to collect taxes. Neither was there a direct relationship between the masses nor were rulers interested to maintain a direct relationship. Mostly the middle man acted on behalf of rulers, at times even collecting extra unnecessary taxes against the law.

Those agents who acted on behalf of the rulers were their closed ones. However, the same closed ones have revolted against their immediate leaders as well. The realm of "Afno Manche (my people)" that we find operating in today's Nepal at all societal levels are nothing, but the entrenched form of same middle agents who used to bridge a gap between ruler and the subjects in the past.

The concept of "Afno Manche (my people)" is entrenched in Nepali society. Such entrenchment has been materialized due to the failures of our institutions. Our institutions ranging from the monarchy of the past to the state, market and political parties of today are extremely rigid. Norms, rules and regulations have been designed in a way that new comers automatically get discouraged to join these institutions.

It remains confined to few those who have been regulating it since its inception. Merits take a back-seat. It is rather a level of

intimacy that one enjoys with top leaders that determines whether one can be a part of those institutions or not. There is therefore a 'lack of space' for majority of Nepalese.

'Lack of space' has been one of the fundamental reasons promoting out-migration in our country. And those who could not migrate vent their frustration through the social and ethnic movements because they want their 'space' to be ensured. It would be wrong to conclude that these movements were aimed at ensuring the rights alone. In fact, it is a search for 'space' which shows willingness to deliver their respective responsibilities in a meaningful way.

Changing the structure and rigidity of institutions is, therefore a need of an hour. Not because the institutions are alone responsible to accommodate the entire Nepali population within it, but because the roles and responsibilities of institutions have dramatically changed and extended over a period of time.

During the inception days, institutions would have regulated with the rigid rules and norms led by few set of leaders as society was not too complex. Today it is not possible for institutions to operate in the same fashion as society has grown more and more complex.

Is it possible for a father alone to impose his unilateral decisions to other family members in today's context? The structure, roles and responsibilities of family members have changed over a period of time. Today it is not the choice of parents, but children's who decide what course they want to pursue in life.

It is not the parents' choice that decides their marriage; it's their own choice. Love marriages that were taboo once have become the order of the day. It is therefore the shared responsibility between the members of family that regulates it.

One can easily imagine the level of complexities that have grown among other social and political institutions that has its open membership within a larger society. 'One man theory' must be replaced with the greater 'collective leadership theory'. And the

rules, regulations and norms within the institutions must be defined accordingly. Are we not living in a time and world where collective initiatives are sought to eradicate collective threats?

Other cultural aspect that works against our prosperity is that we tend to over emphasize either on individualism or collectivism. Individualism is over concentration for self gratification. Individual values, individual goal and growth define individualism. Individual focuses on values like uniqueness, independence, self-expression and personal achievement. Collectivism is more about groups and communities gratification and welfare. Collectivism sacrifices individualism for group's interest. Collectivists find strong identity within their own groups.

Until not long ago, Nepali society could be explained as a society with high collectivism. Nepal remained a Hindu state until recent past. Religious coercion and conversion became natural process as Hindus were endowed with opportunities and privileges in society. Communities and groups adopted and internalized Hinduism and it's learning to ensure that they climb up the social strata.

Hindu spiritualism has taught that collective duty towards the underprivileged masses opens-up the door to enlightenment. 'Duty consciousness' has been ingrained among us through our religion. In the process, duty conscious inherently mingled with individual gratifications. 'I will be emancipated if I perform my duty towards others' has been Vedic and religious teachings.

Over a period of time as the undercurrents of change started challenging perception of religion, quality of service emphasized by duty conscious was defeated with the thematic "I", an actor who was responsible to carry out the services. In a due process, actor became more important than process itself. Individualism outsmarted collectivism. "I" had to deliver more and more to be more powerful. In such a process- the idea of collective service was challenged.

Collectivism and individualism must go hand in hand. An

individual must be empowered with rights, privileges, opportunities, dignities, and life based skills which can be used to maximize one's growth. A capable individual is a one who helps community and nation grow by growing together with them. A nation is, but a conglomeration of individuals. Individual's capacity will ultimately strengthen national capacity. Individual resource is therefore a national resource.

More we capacitate individual, the more we capacitate us as a nation. Collectivism has to be equally valued. An individual cannot grow alone by leaving its society and nation behind. What would be the fate of those individuals who grow in leaps and bound, but are surrounded by incapable and poor ones? Ultimately those capable will fall prey or victim to the incapable masses. Nepali society today has grown individualistic. And we have left our collectivism behind.

Nepali society is facing a question whether to retain some understanding and learning of the past as an asset or to completely dismantle it and move forward? Self proclaimed progressive forces want to dismantle everything that is associated with the past, whereas some others want to retain it. Past cannot be completely overthrown. Past and present mingle with each other to draft the strategy for future.

The characteristic features of our society have been working as an obstacle against our growth. We are a society with a culture of power distance. Cultures with high 'power distance' are those where societal inequalities in status and power are considered acceptable. Such attitude enforces a condition where a socio-economic class/status system prevents an upward mobility of certain sections of society, and where disparities exist in opportunities, wealth and power.

Politics is a cultural arena and unless we find ourselves breaking away from 'power distance', we are likely to witness the rule of few. Fortunately, there has been a drastic change in recent Nepal. Nepali society has today challenged the inequalities of status and power. Unfortunately, the leaders and the new forces of society

willing to challenge the power distance want it only up to the extent from where they can reorganize power distance for them.

In political, socio-cultural and psychological realm; majority of Nepalese tend to live dual lives. One life shows their commitment towards the prevailing context, thereby adopting any systems, isms, thought processes, norms and values within that context. Other life had its own sincere commitment towards self- it believes in certain beliefs, values and life philosophies. Inwardly it wants to lead a different life, but externally it lives in a complete different way.

Most of the Nepalese are, therefore often in dilemmas in most of the time swinging within and outside. Same Nepalese who shouted slogan in defense of democracy would never mind dancing in tune with other despotic "isms" as well. In the past we have seen this many times. When Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala became the first elected prime minister of Nepal, Nepalese celebrated. Within the short time when king Mahendra took over, same Nepalese celebrated again.

Swinging of commitments in individual life is common in Nepal because there are limited avenues for material growth and gain. Majority of Nepalese who have grown materially and thrived financially are those who have been close to one political system or the other; thereby capitalizing the benefits of that system.

We therefore have no stabilized political system thus far. Politically, it might be normal for one system and ideology trying to outsmart the other. What is extremely disturbing for us is the commitment of society that keeps swinging from one power center to other.

In today's context, the Maoists party is the strongest and has potentiality to remain in power for few years; one should not be shocked to find that many have turned themselves Maoists. Recently media reported about film artists and music composers joining the Maoists party en masse. Many of these artists welcomed the move when ex-King Gyanendra seize over the state power and they were inactive during the April movement.

In the past, they were the ones who called Maoists terrorist dancing in tune with the state. Now they have joined it, and tomorrow if Maoists get weakened, they could join some other parties and systems. This is true with majority of Nepalese.

Unless our country provides various other avenues or choices for Nepali masses to grow economically and socially without compelling them to adjust their commitment towards any particular isms, politics or systems; Nepalese are likely to move on with their dual characteristics.

In terms of our population, we are growing leaps and bounds. During 1800 we were only two and a half million people, but it has been predicted that by the end of 2009, we will be approximately swelling to 27.5 million. If the growth of our population continues at the rate of 2.5 percent per annum, we will soon be crossing one hundred million.

Our reproduction rate during 1980s was six and the rate has dropped to three by 2006, yet we are growing. Our population is swelling up, but the opportunities are shrinking. One can imagine the repercussion it would have in Nepali society?

Due to rampant deforestation, our water sources are dying up at an alarming rate. Deforestation has led to a change in the pattern of rainfall. Due to less rainfall, earth has lost its water storage capacity. Major trees contributing for the rainfall like Uttish, Matalo and Chilaune are being destroyed on the exchange of timber. Deforestation has threatened the soil erosion, land slide and natural disaster.

Our Ministry of Health and Population boast of exceptional health service deliveries in our country. On July 11, 2009 the media reported the death of more than 200 Nepalese in the mid west region. It was only in Jajarkot were more than 97 people died of diarrhea. It has not been too long when our successive governments have moved towards providing free health care services and have incorporated the right to health in our interim constitution.

Still our populations are dying even at the hands of easily curable disease like diarrhea. Our population has been suffering from malnutrition. Water we drink has heavy chloroform in it. Foods we consume are poisonous. Airs we breathe are massively polluted. How can we survive and contribute to growth and development? We have successfully failed ourselves in every sphere. Our agencies, organizations, institutions, and 'we the people' working within and outside it, have collectively contributed to our failure.

Austrian Scientist Konrad Lorenz once said "I believe I have found the missing link between animal and civilized man. It's us." I presume he was talking about Nepalese. We are a nation with natural resources, but people that lacks sense of public duty and dedication. We are a country that had many governments, but inefficient administration.

We have drafted many laws, but injustice prevails everywhere in our land. We have many public servants, but they provide no services to us. We are happy to have a legal system that has made the life of criminals easy and difficult for those who wants to abide by it.

We have failed to define our society and a state. What are the coherent life values of a Nepali? What keeps us together as a nation? To me, it is difficult to identify those value systems. Coercion perpetuated by state; power and capital confined within the realm of politics; and an individual and his limited group exercising the state, politics and economy has compelled majority of Nepali population to pray those individuals who control the entire power.

A Nepalese individual's imagination and innovation begins with the aim of getting associated with power centers and ends up by compromising with any new centers that emerges in a process. We are, therefore confined in the cage of our own making. We are a race that has failed to understand the strength of collective success.

Being anti-India is our defined nationalism. Nationalism is many things to many people. For some, it is unifying. For others, it is divisive. For some, it is democratic. For some others, it is

authoritative. For some, it is a culture. For others, it is psychology. For some, it is a modern phenomenon of state formation. For others, it is a response to dysfunction. For some, it is located in geography. And for some others, it is located in people. For some, it is to maintain order. And for others, it is anti order.

For me, the word 'Nationalism' is strictly 'anti-national' both in its concept and application. Nationalism is a specific, rigid set of thoughts and sentiments. Nationalism divides race, ethnicity, humanity and civilizations. It is borne out of cruel anguish of mind. Nation is a conglomeration of various races, ethnicity, languages, classes and castes. Nation is its people.

Nepal is extremely diverse. It is diverse in terms of landscape, climate, people, language, and culture. It is equally diverse in ethnicity, social norms, values, traditions, social practices and religion. Diversity is what it has. Diversity is its resource. We have more than 100 different languages spoken in our country.

We can broadly classify our ethnicity in three major groups: Indo-Nepalese, who originated from India; Tibeto-Nepalese, who are of Tibeto-Mongol origin; and indigenous Nepalese, whose habitation dates to the beginning of civilization. There are many sub ethnic classes, caste and sub-castes in our country that are fundamentally different and, yet their differences are blurred.

Nationalism has therefore to be diverse in Nepali context. We must have a unifying interest, but not unifying culture. Our unified interest can only bind us together. Collective growth can be our unified interest. In the context of New Nepal, nationalism must be defined in terms of our collective prosperity.

We must understand our strengths. Diversity is our strength. It therefore should not be used to weaken us, but rather should be exploited in our favor. We must capitalize on our diverse indigenous knowledge, art, literature, culture, festivals and customs. We are not yet aware about potentialities of the natural resources that can be exploited in our favor.

We may not have fuel reserves, but our hydropower remains underutilized. Almost one third of our land is unfit for agriculture or forestry. Eighteen percent of the total land area has been used for agriculture, of which 88.8 percent has been categorized as arable land, 4.4 percent as land under permanent crops, and the remaining as pastures, woodlands, and other categories. Most agricultural land is in the Hill and Terai regions.

We Nepalese are living incoherent lives. Our lives lack sequence. It lacks substance. We live to live. For us, substance is not important. Survival is rather more important. Lives of our population are closely interdependent with each other. Our dependency has been borne out of our cultural values. In family we are dependent. In society we are dependent. Today's nations depend upon each other for their survival. There is nothing wrong in depending among each other, provided dependency is equally shared by all members.

Dependency is not altogether negative. It does not curtail prosperity. But one sided dependency is slavery. It is anti-freedom. It could be defined development if Nepal and India are dependent to each other. It is suicidal if only Nepal has to depend upon India or vice-versa.

Nepal therefore needs a breakthrough. It needs a breakthrough from the nepotistic and corrupt mentality. Breakthrough from past follies and present inefficiencies. Breakthrough from the attitude of subjugation. Breakthrough from the ideas that has made us slave to individual leaders, their egos, systems and norms.

Breakthrough from hunger of excessive growth at any cost. Breakthrough from the rigidity of institutions. Breakthrough from corruption that is entrenched and has become a value system for majority of us. We need a major breakthrough for our prosperity, respect and dignity.

Our emancipation lies in breaking through all elements that has compelled us to live a crippling life. We do not live a life, in its

real sense. We have nothing to offer to emancipate our life from our own follies. We are submerged characters compromising with everything for our living. We are failed livers. If we want to ensure our right to life, we must find new approach for our living as well.

If one looks closely, one finds Nepali students less interested in studying. Nepali doctors are less serious about their services towards patients. Bureaucrats and government officials work for everything except for the institutions that has employed them. Our institutions are, therefore decaying today.

Our police are submerged in corruption and favor more anti social elements. Our police therefore create disorder for us. Our teachers do not teach. Our schools and academic institutions have lost its academic credentials. Our family has lost our own values. Our country is in a dire state because of us. Majority of 'we Nepalese' could be defined with certain variables; inefficient, greedy, violent, corrupt and nepotistic.

Nepal is a country that is located between India and China. Both our neighbors are economically thriving. They have their own issues and threats. However, they are well placed and united together as a country to face it. Only in the last five years, China has contributed to one third of world's Gross Domestic Product.

On the other hand, India contribution has approximately grown to sixteen percent during the same time period. World is no longer in position to ignore both India and China because of their growing contributions. We are best placed to reap the advantages of these giant economies, which we have so far failed to.

Ours cannot be an industrialized economy. We are an agricultural country. In our context, there are larger benefits of being a farmer than a trader. This is not to argue that engineering industrial arena is not possible. We could benefit becoming an entrepreneur rather than working a ten to five job.

Peter Drucker said, 'Social innovation is as important as new science or new technology in creating new knowledge and making

old ones obsolete'. We must therefore innovate 'something' that can be marketed.

We can market our culture. We can market the diversity of our language; historicity of our traditions; art and literature of our varied ethnicities; knowledge of how people from various ethno-lingual backgrounds live together in a world that is deeply engrossed in fighting in the name of civilization, religion and ethnicity. We can be rich by marketing our traditional knowledge. We just have to add a pinch of innovation and life values in our resources.

We must strengthen our infrastructure. And use our younger population both in the intellectual and labor work. We must make the best use of new technologies. Technologies are not luxury for us, but a necessity. State can serve a community dying with diarrhea in Jajarkot in three different ways.

Either, it could link Jajarkot with various infrastructures. Or it could shift the entire community to a place where they could enjoy services and infrastructures. Or they could be linked to Kathmandu with the telemedicine system where doctor could diagnose and prescribe proper medicine for them. We need newer technologies to explore the unidentified and unexplored resources we have.

Our land is underutilized. It belongs to landowners, but not to those who till it. According to the 1991 World Bank report, forty percent of our land is in the hands of five percent of population. Land should belong to those who could best manage and maximize profit out of it. The government should buy entire land from the landlords and sell it in a reasonable price to those farmers who are willing to make agriculture their occupation. Not to those who again sell same land back to the landlords at a higher price.

We have already spent millions of dollars in charting out best sectoral policies. We do have plans to accelerate our economy, to manage the best schools and universities for our children, to provide the best of health facilities for our population, to secure food rights for them. Our interim constitution has already guaranteed right to life, health, education and food for the entire Nepalese population.

What we do not have is a will for execution, imagination to maintain and extend services to people and productive work ethics. Common people have been expecting from our social, economic and political institutions to transform their lives. But our institutions have largely failed to meet our expectations. Gap between the expectations and achievements are thus ever growing culminating to anarchy and frustration.

We neither have to vie against nor align ourselves with any other country for our survival. We can rather help them in many ways. Through our growth, we can partner with them and be viable means for their growth. We can act as catalyst in bringing India and China more to each other, helping them understand each other in better ways.

We do not have to use one against the other. Nepal can work as a coordinator facilitating strong ties between these two countries. As India and China cannot be ignored because of the contribution they are making to the global world order, we will be equally valued for helping these countries to embolden their ties not only in the economic realm alone, but through the transfer of knowledge that these two great civilizations have to offer.

Indeed a country cannot grow alone in today's globalized context. We need a cooperation of distinct quality from our international friends. Bilateral, multilateral donors, embassies and our international friends also need to learn from their predecessors.

Shreeman Narayan was an exceptional ex-Indian ambassador who arrived in Nepal towards the end of 1964. He was a general secretary of Indian national congress who under an influence of Gandhiji practiced diplomacy that was based on truth. He was conscious and aware of self-respect that Nepalese attach to their dignities.

Of course, in today's context, it is Nepalese who have eroded their self respect. Swami Vivekananda once said- "We, we, and none else, are responsible for what we suffer. We are the effects, and we are the causes. If I am unhappy, it has been of my own making, and that very thing shows that I can be happy if I will."

However Mr. Narayanan always took extra effort in extending courtesies to Nepalese friends at all level. The book he wrote- "India and Nepal: An Exercise in Open Diplomacy" still stands a testimony for what this gentlemen as a diplomat believed and practiced.

Our international friends must understand that our motherland is not a playing field for clashing international interests or for anyone's interest for that matter. It is home to twenty six million Nepali populations that want to grow along with other nations. Our children and adults have their own dreams, which they want to fulfill in their own home land. Our country deserves better respect than she has been endowed with.

As we try to build a new nation, we are in need of international friends like Shreeman Narayan. For if we fail, all those responsible for the success of Nepal collectively fail. Our close neighbor India has clearly articulated its policies towards Nepal- 'the prosperous Nepal is what we want to see'.

And if that does not happen, will the people of Nepal fail alone? What about all those international aid agencies whose economic survival rests on the tax money they have collected from their own citizens? If we fail as a country, won't these international aid agencies failing their own people?

We, as a nation have all resources that can guarantee our prosperity. We have been loved by nature. World class heritage sites are in our own homeland. We are one of the wonders of nature. We are endowed with natural herbs and medicines.

In the recent past, media has repeatedly reported that we have so much of minerals and wealth that are yet to be explored. We have many life values and resources that are yet to be explored. Unfortunately, we have failed to manage whatever resources we have.

And there is a reason for that. Once my father told me- 'Sumit, it has been a week now, but none of our family members have noticed a leakage in a toilet. So get the new tap and fix it'. I said - 'Sure Baba, will do'. And I did not fix that until my father brought the

new one and fixed it for us. We have been ignoring small things in our lives in a same fashion as I ignored my father's advice for fixing a tap in a toilet. Had my father not fixed it in time, our toilet would have been flooded.

Our society and institutions within it has been today flooded with inefficiencies due to our failure to fix those on time. We have more and more divorce cases today for our couples have failed to widen each others' understanding in the new context. We have more and more old age homes for we have ignored the basic principles and life values of our family. We have more and more corruption for we have ignored those laws that are made to curtail it.

We have more and more criminals and anti-social elements for we have failed to punish them. It is our failure that has led us to where we are today. And there is no one in the globe, not any country, or any bi-lateral and multi lateral donors that can help us out from this mess, unless we realize our failure. Let us begin to fix our families; society will fall into place.

Television news has reported many times with glaring footages of Nepalese parents queuing up outside the examination halls of School Leaving Certificate (SLC). They want their children to pass with good merits. For this to happen, they even pass on the answer sheets inside the examination halls. Most of our parents teach us how to cheat in exams. What could one expect from those children who are taught to cheat by their own parents?

Some teachers are often involved in helping their students providing with answer sheets inside the examination halls. There are many schools that try to publicize question paper for their students. Our parents, teachers and schools are engrossed in such activities because they want to ensure a career and a quality life for their children or students. They believe good grades bring good reputation.

What are primarily forgotten is through such attempt our parents and schools are helping us to be an efficient thief. Later on, with all knowledge and skills, same children loot society and nation

very skillfully. Our values in fact are making us thieves. Cheating is, therefore widespread in our society. A seed of corruption in an individual's life is implanted during the early years within family and academic institutions in our country.

It is such value that needs to be uprooted in order to make our society a corruption free. During April 2009 a story reported in a daily newspaper stated about a boy studying in the 11th standard who planned his own kidnapping. He asked his friends to kidnap him so that they could together extract a huge sum of money from his own parents for his release. Who is to blame for this?

In spite of all our weaknesses, we are brave people. Undefeatable spirit that we derive from our history still stands with us as a legacy. We fought against those who were the superpowers then. And the fact remains, we were not defeated. Though inefficient, we are larger than life. Though greedy, we are larger than our names. Though corrupt, we are larger than our own ambitions.

Nepalese history is a testimony that we always had individuals who rose at different occasions when country needed them most. Today is such a moment. Today we need bunch of those who could carry the legacy of past and blend them with the innovations of today to craft the strategy for tomorrow.

Wealth can be created through the maximum use of intelligence and labor. We must divert our attention towards growing our mind and labor. A humane mind must be given an opportunity to grow to the maximum. Nourished food and environment one receives during childhood determines the quality of healthy body and mind in adulthood. Extra attention has, therefore to be given to our children.

Wealth and resources is the by-product of humane hunger for innovation, growth and prosperity. Prosperity is realization of the highest truth because all round prosperity is synonymous to all round development of mind, body and soul. We need prosperous people around us. We therefore need Nepalese who have fully grown body, mind and soul.

Seeking self existence through poverty and anarchy is anti-prosperity. Just like communists around the globe, Nepalese communism thrives on poverty, unemployment and anarchy. Their philosophical foundation and actions are oriented to leveling down rather than leveling up.

Communists do not believe in equally discovering and distributing wealth, but the equal distribution of misery and poverty. Communists therefore cannot seek prosperity. Moment they seek it, their existence will wither away. For our prosperity, we need a positive hunger. Positive hungers have potentiality to turn our begging attitudes to richness.

As a common man, I have my own limitations. We all have our own limitations too. I can neither treat the ailments of my country nor prescribe any suggestions to help it get out from the present mess we are living with. My country has passed centuries of her life unlike the way I have passed thirty two years of mine.

I cannot understand the vastness of knowledge that life, philosophy, science and religion have to offer. I do not understand whether there is any life after death or not. I neither understand the regulatory processes of universe nor claim that God exists. I do not understand the vibrating forces that run our world. I have no clue about the intricacies of knowledge in relation to real freedom and spiritualism. I neither understand the vagueness of ideas that survive by disproving each other false.

I have learned small things out of my own context, and my own life. And one of the small things is- 'fixing and correcting the follies within me'. That is within my limit. I have realized that meaning of my life lies in constantly challenging me. I have my weakness to fight against.

I have my own knowledge and understanding to be challenged. And I have my own values, practices and lust that need to be questioned constantly. I have to keep testing myself in order to find the meaning and making sense of my own life to me.

Bhagvat Gita says:

everṁ buddheḥ param buddhvā
 samstabhyātmānam ātmanā
 jahi śatrum mahā-bāho
 kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam

(Karma Yoga, sloka 43)

This means: Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to the material senses, mind and intelligence, O mighty-armed Arjuna, one should steady the mind by deliberate spiritual intelligence [Krishna consciousness] and thus-by spiritual strength-conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust.

Finally I feel content today. Becoming content is not becoming idle. It is neither a submission nor a contemplative phase alone. It is definitely an inaction and yet a strong action. It is renouncement and yet a devotional service. It is a final phase to get started with the journey next. And therefore I have made my choice.

Passionate life is not enough. It needs to blend with reason as well. I hope my country will soon start looking into her real self. Nepal should begin exploring what she is, who she is. What she stands for and what her ideals and philosophies are. She also needs to think about her role in the world and how best she can contribute towards the making and remaking of just and peaceful world.

I believe the day is not far when my country will soon combine her passion with reason to move forward. Our parents, families, institutions and society will soon find some leisure to make a thorough judgment about them. Such self-reflection will ultimately provide much needed life blood to my country pumping her to achieve a dignified place in a global map.

Drafting a new constitution for a nation is not merely to scribe letter and words in a paper, but to explore the spirit of a nation through self-reflection and self-consciousness.

In the world of words and voices, silence always has a deep and special meaning to convey. We are yet to discover new

resources, new knowledge that probably lies deep within us- our own silence. Silence is in many ways a win-win revolution. Completely a new way of living has to be identified.

And new is not the repetition of present. Only through such a silence can knowledge, innovation, freedom and emancipation spontaneously flow from within. We have lived with lots of noises displaying utter stinking and decaying characteristics of our living. Time to alter the way of life is now. Today is the moment of choice for us.

Like many least developed countries around the world, we have our own issues to get rid with. Many third world and developing countries have failed as they were unable to rise against their own follies. We have been constantly looked upon by history and humanity. Old civilizations have already contributed to humanity through their life values and knowledge.

New world demands new knowledge and new inventions. We have in fact been entrusted to create the new one. And in a history of our nation, today is such an occasion for us. Today is the time. What could be more illuminating when our knowledge transcendence us to achieve peace, prosperity and dignity for the entire population at a time when world is crippled with war, hatred, poverty and suppression.

What could be more enlightening when a tiny country like Nepal proves the world that in spite of one hundred and twenty two different languages and ninety different ethnicities; population of twenty six million can thrive together, live together, and rejoice together?

We must rise. We must defeat our follies. If we cannot pass on the success, we stand with no right to pass failure to our generation next. We cannot merely be a bystander in the passage of time. We have been enlisted as one of the poor country in the world. Are we poor? How could a country be poor that has a capacity to unleash mighty revolutions against all forms of despotism? How can a country be poor when its populations have a craving desire for success and happiness?

How can a country be poor when its indigenous knowledge has so much to offer? How can a country be poor when it possesses an iron confidence to fight against all adversaries? How are we poor when our natural beauty even holds the capacity to beautify all those who come close to it? One can ask our foreign friends who have visited us at least once in their life time.

We may not have ample of resources unlike rich countries, but we have ample of confidence to create resources for us. Attacking upon the socialists, Bastiat once said- "Everyone wants to live at the expense of the state. They forget that the state lives at the expense of everyone."

We have therefore forgotten our strength and tend to survive in our weaknesses. We must renew our strength. There are no problems in world that has no solutions. Dreams would have no existence without the existence of power to get those materialized.

Science and philosophy has declared that any entity in the planet earth pass through birth, maturity and decay. Francis Bacon said- "Nations, too like individuals, slowly grow and surely die: some nations wax, others wane, and in a brief space the races of living things are changed, and like runners hand over the lamp of life." Our country would have the same story. It took us 5,000 years to truly reborn in our own land. The phase of maturity has just started. In such a context, who can claim that we cannot rise?

And men can do it. World history stands a testimony that it's men who have reshaped the fate of societies and nations. Humans are endowed with such eternal capacities that no power can stand as a hurdle against it. Otherwise Earnest Hemingway would not have said "Men can be destroyed but not defeated."

Swami Vivekananda would not have said "Each one of us is the maker of his/her own fate. The human will stands beyond all circumstances. Before it- the strong, gigantic, infinite will and freedom in man- all the powers, even of nature, must bow down, succumb, and become its servants." Our capacity is therefore lying dormant within us. In a pursuit of building a new life, new values,

new nation, our spirit could be destroyed but it cannot be defeated. Spirit does not yield or dies. It remains forever.

Let us rediscover our fighting self, our spirit. Let us discover the meaning of our existence. Let us not remain only in our dreams, but develop courage to rise. Let us reborn. Let us rediscover the true spirit of our nation. For only in her salvation lies our emancipation.

Let us begin a new life for us, our country and entire humanity. Let us begin a new journey. I believe the day is not far when my nation will soon make her choice of beginning new life for her. We need a collective pursuit and enquiry for that.

After all what could be more pleasing to any men and a nation that have been both provided with an opportunity to begin a journey that is both substantial and fulfilling. Except meaningful fulfillment, what else remains with us in our death-beds?

Antonio Gramsci, in a letter from prison to his son Delio wrote, 'Contemplating all the men of the world, who come together in society to work, struggle and better themselves, cannot but please you more than any other thing'. I realized my existence lies in working together with society, people and communities living within it with a pursuit to better myself.

With such realization, I am encountered with my own salvation. And with such an experience, I have begun my new journey together with my nation, not knowing how and when it will come to an end. For me, it is the quality of journey that is important, not the outputs. It is the span of time lives with utmost sincerity that gives meaning to my life. With such a journey, who else could be as happy and as rich as I am today?

And I am aware of the fact that journey walks its own path, unless it meets an end. My feeble eyes cannot spot when I am going to meet my end, but I have tied my knot with my end for infinite period. What is the point of getting engrossed in saving life that has to meet its own end? I would be wasting my time. I would rather invest my time to realize my life. My realization suggests I have a

transcendence to embrace, an ultimate Samadhi to fall in love for.
And my love for my ultimate Samadhi has just begun. I have begun
my new path to romance.

And my journey continues.....

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